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Girls basketball team gets win
Wadena County gets Alzheimer's prevention funding
High school honor roll



School board approves personnel changes

By Mark Anderson
Managing Editor

The Staples-Motley School Board held a short meeting on Feb. 2 to approve contract non-renewals. School Superintendent Shane Tappe said this is a yearly procedure that is recommended by the Minnesota School Board Association, for teachers who are teaching out of field or have Tier 1 or Tier 2 contracts that are considered temporary licenses.

The non-renewal of contracts allows the school to submit job posts asking for teachers who are licensed in those areas.

Tier 1 teacher non-renewals included Samantha Schimpp, Kristi Odden, Jeff Sterriker and Aaron Carter.

Tier 2 teacher non-renewals included Jocelyn Anderson, Amanda Keplin, Tina Mitts, Angela Jares,

and Kristopher Mumm

Out of field placements included Kim Prestridge, Melissa Wright, BobbyJo Johnson, Lisa Koenigs, Holt Truax and Emili Vieths. Probationary teacher non-renewals included Melissa Wright and Teneesa Mumm.

In other news, the board

- Approved resignations of Claire Grunewald, junior high softball; Melissa Jewison, Adventures; and Jessica Williams, paraprofessional
- Approved hire of Madelyn Ziegler, elementary social worker. This is a licensed social worker who will replace a social worker who requested to leave their contract during the school year.
- Approved retirement of Sandy Opheim at the end of the school year. She has taught for 26 years at the district.

Staples-Motley's 2026 SnoDaze royalty court

The coronation ceremony for the Staples-Motley High School's 2026 SnoDaze King and Queen was held Feb. 4, at Centennial Auditorium in Staples. Pictured above are members of the royalty court which includes underclassmen attendants as well as the senior court. From left are John Schotzko, freshman; Roman Ingebretson, sophomore; Tyson Turner, junior; king candidates

Avandre Brandt, Elijah Greenwaldt, Adrian Gomez, Eli Ruten and Peyton Jares, seniors; King Gabe Kroll and Queen Ava Birkholtz; queen candidates Abby Brichacek, Sadye Anderson, Pamela Lawrence, Cecily Moe and Raina Mikhaeil, seniors; Paige Warren, junior; Addison Potter, sophomore; Kaylee Perius, freshman. (Staples World photo by Dawn Timbs)

Reese, Greenwaldt, Tureson are first girls wrestlers to make state

By Mark Anderson
Managing Editor

Kana Reese, Leah Greenwaldt and Anika Tureson earned a trip to the girls state wrestling tournament to become the first Staples-Motley girls wrestlers to qualify for state.

Staples-Motley wrestlers performed exceptionally well at the Section 7 tournament, held Feb. 6-7 at Mora. Another Cardinal wrestler, Maddie Kist, also made the

finals at her weight bracket but lost in a true second match just missing out on a trip to state.

In the toughest section in the state, with more wrestlers ranked in the top ten than any other section, the Staples-Motley team excelled, beating several top seeds and ranked wrestlers in multiple brackets.

"It was unbelievable," said Head Coach Holton

See **WRESTLING** on page 10a



Successful section tournament team

Coaches, wrestlers and alternates from the Staples-Motley girls wrestling team that is sending three girls to state, had one more section finals and two more medal winners, celebrated after their successfule tournament. Front row from left, coach Kodiey Lind, Talyn

Lind, Ali Reese, Kalee Winter, Lilly Czechowicz and Head Coach Holton Truax; back row, coach Chris Dobson, Jocelyn Vogt, Anika Tureson, Kana Reese, Isabelle Dobson, Leah Greenwaldt, Aubrie Houchin, Maddie Kist and coach Steve Jennissen. (Submitted photo)

Weather

2026

This Week's Forecast

	High	Low	Cond.
Feb. 11	33	22	P. Cloudy
Feb. 12	38	22	P. Cloudy
Feb. 13	40	23	P. Cloudy
Feb. 14	40	24	P. Cloudy
Feb. 15	38	25	M. Cloudy
Feb. 16	38	23	Cloudy
Feb. 17	37	23	M. Cloudy

Last Year, 2025

	High	Low	Cond.
Feb. 11	0°	-19	Sunny
Feb. 12	2	-20	M. Sunny
Feb. 13	3	-21	Sunny
Feb. 14	14	0	Cloudy
Feb. 15	11	3	Sunny
Feb. 16	4	-8	Sunny
Feb. 17	-6	-24	Sunny

Average Temps:
H = 25° Low = 6°
Enjoy the warmer temps

Compiled by
Dale Hausmann,
WCCO's Staples area
Weatherwatcher

Public Notices

Byron Township 9A

City of Motley 9A

Todd bituminous 9A

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Obituaries

Marvel Bartylla

Muriel Nelson



Lip sync contest champs

Members of the freshmen class performed segments of a few songs at the SnoDaze lip sync contest Feb. 4, including the "Y.M.C.A." Pictured in front is Daniel Storm-Hughs. Back row, from left, are John Shotzko,

Caleb Kopp, Jackson Alexander, Kennedy Judd, Elaina Elfstrum, Vanessa Nelson, Kenton Pope. The freshmen class took first place. (Staples World photo by Dawn Timbs)



Staples High School classmates reunite



tion, as well as a photo of the two of them. They were high school sweethearts and have now been married since March 17, 1978 - St. Patrick's Day. (Staples World photos by Dawn Timbs)

A few members of the Staples High School Class of 1974 met up recently at the Spot Cafe in Staples to reminisce over breakfast. Pictured above, from left, are Jeff Marden, Karol (Wolpern) Shanahan, Tom Odden, Jan (Peterson) Mayer, Dick Bremer, Pat Goff, Bev (Mennis) Goff.

At left, Pat and Bev (Mennis) Goff hold up a copy of the Staples World from May 30, 1974, which included highlights from their class's graduation,



Leading the Motley Fire Department

Todd Judd (far right) will once again serve as Chief of the Motley Fire Department. Joining him in leadership roles for 2026 are, from right, Nathan Thiede, 1st Asst. Chief; Tim Holmberg, 2nd Asst.

Chief; Karyn Thiede, Medical Officer. The Motley City Council approved the appointments of these veteran firefighters at their regular council meeting Dec. 8, 2025. (Staples World photo by Dawn Timbs)

Motley area law enforcement

Recent reports from the Motley Police Dept. (MPD) and Morrison County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) included the following:

Jan. 31 - The MCSO responded to a report of a fire at the 25000 block of Beaver Rd., Cushing.

Jan. 31 - The MCSO received a report of a two-vehicle accident with

unknown injuries at 6612 Hwy 210 SW, Motley, and proceeded to page out the Motley Fire and Rescue Dept.

Jan. 31 - A Morrison County deputy conducted a traffic stop at Hwy 10 and Azalea Rd. in Motley, subsequently issuing a citation to the driver, Breanna Marylou Shermer, 28.

Jan. 29 - The MCSO received a report from a juvenile, regarding a suicidal subject in Cushing.

Jan. 28 - Motley Police responded to a request from the Brainerd Police to check on a possible stolen vehicle in Motley. Upon investigation, Motley Police did not locate the vehicle.



Singing her heart out

Chloe Wingert, a junior at Staples-Motley High School, performed the song, "Dream On," at the SnoDaze Coronation Feb. 4, at Centennial Auditorium. (Staples World photo by Dawn Timbs)



Staples-Motley faculty get their groove on

Staples-Motley faculty members participated at the SnoDaze lip sync contest Feb. 4, taking a close second place to the freshmen class. Pictured, from left, are Joci

Anderson, Sarah Decker, Val Turner, Debbie Ferdon, Staci Schultz, Bobbyjo Johnson, Caitlyn Hacker. (Staples World photos by Dawn Timbs)



Cardinal sophomores came on strong

Staples-Motley sophomores gave it their all at the SnoDaze lip sync contest, performing a variety of dance numbers along the way. Pictured, from left, are Leah Greenwaldt, Kalee Winter, Sarah Kroll, Lydia Roeloffs,

Sophia Luna-Santiago, Alexa Dolezal, Natalie Hanson, Lauren Dolezal, Maci Mithun, Jacob Faulkner, Carson DeWald, Jada Ellingson, Isaac Vargas-DeWald. Back row, hidden, Seth Cossentine, Roman Engebretsen.



Junior class performers

Staples-Motley juniors performed a variety of songs at the SnoDaze lip sync contest Feb. 4. Pictured, from

left, are Hailey Richardt, Bella Hines, Hannah Cole, Tyson Turner (partially hidden), Evan Schultz.

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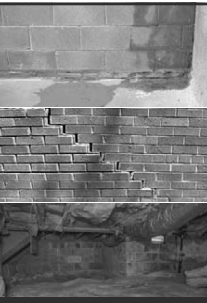
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Staples Police report

Recent reports taken by the Staples Police Dept included:

Jan. 18, Staples Police received a call regarding a resident who said a person has been released from prison and may be back in town.

Jan. 19, Staples Police received a call of a possible assault and escalating behavior.

Jan. 20, Staples Police received a call about a person who had set a hawk loose on his property. Reporting party wanted to file a restraining order against the person with the hawk, if he comes back.

Jan. 20, at 10:11 p.m., Staples Police received a call from a resident who said their car was in a local shop and her husband forgot to get his passport out for a 5 a.m. flight the next day. Police contacted a keyholder for the business.

Jan. 21, Staples Police responded to a vehicle upside down in the median on Hwy 10, east of Staples. Two females, ages 75 and 39, were involved.

Jan. 23, Staples Police responded to a report of a loud noise that sounded like a gun shot. Party not sure if it's trees cracking due

to cold. Police have heard other reports in other parts of town with similar sounds.

Jan. 26, at 12:04 a.m., Staples Police stopped vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed on 12th St. NE. Driver was arrested for DWI.

Jan. 25, Staples Police received a report of a person who's drinking and is on probation.

Jan. 27, Staples Police investigated a pedestrian hit by a vehicle on Hwy 10 (see report in Feb. 4 newspaper). A caller said they saw the report of the accident and looked it up on the live train camera facing the highway. She said the male can be seen walking past the camera with no shoes on and later the sound of a collision could be heard.

Jan. 27, Staples Police took a report of a person concerned regarding someone they know drinking and driving with a child in the vehicle.

Jan. 28, Staples Police assisted a person who finally caught a stray cat they had been chasing throughout the cold stretch of weather. The cat was brought to the Staples Veterinary Clinic. Police informed the person that she could pick the cat up two days later.

75 YEARS Ago - 1951

• Feb. 8, 1951 - Staples residents found the February third issue of Collier's Magazine, out last week, one of unusual interest to them. In one of the photos in a two-page color spread appeared the picture of Sgt. Harry Siers of Staples. So far as can be ascertained by The World this is the first time a soldier from Staples has been pictured in a magazine of national circulation.

In an accompanying article, Bill Stapleton, Collier's staff member told how he visited the 78th AAA gun battalion in Korea at a date

- O -
Compiled by
Dawn Timbs
- O -

not mentioned. He had gone there to take pictures of a gun battery in action.

The pictures are fine ones and in a group picture, showing the men trying to get warm, appears Sgt. Siers' picture. He appears to be smiling at some remark made by one of the men.

Sgt. Siers is a brother of Mrs. John Odden, who is the former Norma Siers.

• Feb. 8, 1951 - The elimination contest for the annual speech contest of the west district for the Staples high school was held at the auditorium Feb. 6, with the following results: Humorous reading - Theresa Wrede, Delores Teigen, Doreen Conlin. Dramatic reading - Pat Roberts, Douglas Squires, Joan Malfeo. Oration - Ruth Jackson, Marcus Anderson. Manuscript reading - Pat Bartol, Joan Sperley. Discussion - Lloyd Enke.

Judges for the event were Miss Goldie Dugstad, Mrs. Rosamond Matthews, and Richard Longbella. The students were under the direction of Norman Anderson, head of the speech dept., of Staples high school.

• Feb. 8, 1951 - What appears to be malicious destruction of property and attempted robbery occurred in Staples early Sunday morning, by a person or persons unknown at the present time.

The quarter-inch thick plate glass window in the door of the Staples State bank was broken, and, according to Lew Dailey chief of police, the person or persons breaking the glass used a heavy iron bar to deliberately smash the glass. From the investigation, no apparent robbery was attempted.

50 YEARS Ago - 1976

• Feb. 5, 1976 - The Cardinal and White clad gradplers of Staples High school added another honor to their long list of accomplishments this season and another trophy for their display as they downed the Paynesville Bulldogs last Saturday evening in the inter-conference wrestling meet at Staples.

The Cardinals of Coach Don Dravis are the champions of the Mid-State Conference and the Paynesville team are the champions of the Central Gopher Conference.

Staples emerged the victor of the meet by a score of 35-19, winning eight of the 12 matches. Captains of Coach Dravis' team are Jim Johnson, Tony Van Buren and Dave Sowers.

• Feb. 5, 1976 - Coach Tom Wolhowe's Cardinal cagers did it. They beat the Wadena Indians last Friday evening before the hometown fans in the Staples Auditorium and what a sweet victory it was as the Cards rallied from a 12-point deficit in the third quarter to triumph 67-65.

The hero of the Mid-State Conference tussle between the two arch rivals has to be Dave Blanchard, who unknowingly played three quarters of ball with a hairline fracture of the ankle, yet finished with 25 points and sank the winning basket and added a pair of free throws in the fading seconds to assure Staples of the glorious victory.

• Feb. 6, 1976 - During the recent St. Paul Winter Carnival celebration, a former

Looking back



Mystery photo

Hello readers. This week's archive photo is from 1976. Do you know who these people are and perhaps the context of the photo? Do you have a memory to share? Email your answers and where

you're from to dtimbs@staplesworld.com by Friday, or call 218-894-1112. The answers will be published in next week's paper, as well as a new mystery photo.



Mystery solved

Last week's mystery photo published in the Feb. 1, 2001 edition of the Staples World featured cast members from Staples Motley High School who earned top honors at the Sub Section 24 One-Act Play contest. Seated, from left, are Martin Brenny, Julia Nytes and Tom Craft. Standing is Chantelle Miner. Their play, "For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls," won first place in competition with three other schools. The play, a parody of Tennessee Williams' "The

Glass Menagerie," was directed by Tom Vasecka. The contest was held at Centennial Auditorium in Staples.

Mike Koppes of Staples recognized Brenny, Nytes and Craft, but said he did not recognize Miner. Koppes said his daughter Bridgette graduated with them in 2001 and wondered if there was a Madrigal that year.

Thanks for participating in our mystery photo.

Long Prairie Police

Christian Rafael Melen Perales, Long Prairie. Driving without a valid license for vehicle class or type. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Dept. of Natural Resources

Ethan James Hoffman, Grey Eagle. Dark house, fish house or shelter on ice without license. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Shane Allyn Holen, Brainerd. RV-fail to display valid ATV registration/decal as required. Fine \$25. Fee \$85.

Connor Matthew Jost, Alexandria. Snowmobiles-fail to display snowmobile registration decal. Fine \$25. Fee \$85.

Daniel L. Lambright, Eagle Bend. Trespass-retrieving wounded game violation. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Jason Todd Larsen, Long Prairie. Fishing-take or possess fish over limit. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

John Rodney Leinen, Long Prairie. Fishing-Osakis and Little Osakis Lakes Walleye regulation violation. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Tanner Thomas Matthews, Garfield. Fishing-extra line. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

John Mechale Pregler, Big Lake. Fishing-extra line. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Micael Gerard Theisen, St. Cloud. Fish and Game-dark house, fish house or shelter on ice without license. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

MN State Patrol

Caleb Andrew Bradrick, Pelican Rapids. Speed 89/70 Fine \$60. Fee \$85.

Dominique Jeudy, Jamaica, NY. Speed 86/70. Fine \$60. Fee \$85.

Elise Pauline Kubosch, Minneapolis. Speed 90/70. Fine \$70. Fee \$155.

Derek Jon Mixer, Pine River. Speed 65/60. Fine \$40. Fee \$85.

William Brian Porter, Louisville, KY. Speed 85/70. Continued. Unsupervised probation, 6 mo. Fee \$75.

Christina Marie Soltis, Moorhead. Speed 80/70. Fine \$40. Fee \$85.

Staples Police Dept.

Jordan Taylor Folkestad, Wadena. Driving after revocation. Fine \$200. Fee \$85. Driver must carry proof of insurance when operating vehicle. Fine \$200.

Brody Jaradon Shaw, Staples. Liquor, consumption by persons under 21. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Todd County Sheriffs Dept.

Jack Joseph Anderson, Pillager. Speed 70/55. Fine \$60. Fee \$85. Expired registration. Fine \$30.

Mark Allen Boesl, Garfield. Failure to obtain a burning permit. Fine \$50. Fee \$85. Burn during burning ban. Fine \$50.

Michael Theodore Brown, Little Falls. Expired registration. Fine \$50. Fee \$85. Tyler Christopher Eggert, Long Prairie. Driving after revocation. Fine \$200. Fee \$85.

Nikesha Anna Elifritz, Staples. Driving after revocation. Fine \$200. Fee \$85.

Bryan Fulgencio Rosario, Long Prairie. Speed 90/60. Fine \$100. Fee \$185. Careless driving. Fine \$100.

D'Andre Montreavon Hammond, Wadena. Liquor consumption by persons under 21. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Andrew Joseph Katterhagen, Long Prairie. Expired registration. Fine \$30. Fee \$85.

Cristabel Marie Malave Medina, Wadena. Driving after revocation. Fine \$200. Fee \$85. Child passenger restraint system-age 2 or older/internal harness/front. Fine \$50.

Osva Lemuel Morales Ortega, Long Prairie. Driving without a valid license for vehicle class or type. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Clayton Joseph Niehaus, Osakis.

Liquor consumption by persons under 21. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Jayden Elijah Ray Pelan, New York Mills. Liquor consumption by persons under 21. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Daylon John Schardit, Brainerd. Liquor consumption by persons under 21. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

The following cases were heard before Judge Michael D. Leeser in Seventh District Court in Todd County January 28, 2026.

Thomas Alan Dow, St. Paul. Theft-take/transfer moveable property-without consent. Convicted. Local confinement (90 days, stay 0 mo 79 days for 1 yr credit for time served: 11 days). Supervised probation, 1 yr. Fine \$200. Restitution \$48.08. Fee \$75.

The following cases were heard before Judge Ellen L. Maas in Seventh District Court in Todd County January 27, 2026.

Tanairis Diaz Morales, Little Falls. Driver must carry proof of insurance when operating vehicle. Dismissed. Driving without a valid license for vehicle class or type. Dismissed. DWI-fourth degree-driving while impaired. Dismissed. Careless driving-operate any vehicle carelessly on street or highway. Sentenced. Local confinement (90 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo 89 days for 1 yr credit for time served: 1 day). Supervised probation, 1 yr. Fine \$425. Fee \$75. Traffic-DWI-operate motor vehicle-alcohol concentration 0.08 within 2 hours. Dismissed.

Bailey Scott Frady, Eagle Bend. Drives consciously disregarding a substantial or unjustifiable RI. Stay of adjudication. Unsupervised probation, 1 yr. Fine \$40.

Wesley Brian Holmquist, Long Prairie. DWI-fourth degree driving while impaired. Dismissed. Traffic-DWI-operate motor vehicle-alcohol concentration 0.08 within 2 hours. Unsupervised probation, 1 yr. Fine \$200. Fee \$105.

Yair Enrique Martinez Corrales, Melrose. Open bottle law. Fine \$30. Fee \$75.

John Wesley Theodor, Long Prairie. Speed 96/55. Sentenced. Fine \$300. Fee \$75. Driver fails to Yield right of way to emergency vehicle. Fine \$25. Driver must carry proof of insurance when operating vehicle. Dismissed.

The following cases were heard before Judge Ellen L. Maas in Seventh District Court in Todd County January 26, 2026.

Junior Hernandez Mendez, Long Prairie. DWI-operate motor vehicle-alcohol concentration 0.08 within 2 hours. Sentenced. Local confinement (90 days, stay 88 days for 1 yr credit for time served: 2 days). Supervised probation, 1 yr. Fine \$450. Fee \$105. DWI-3rd degree-driving while impaired, 1 aggravating factor. Dismissed.-Driving without a valid license for vehicle class or type. DWI-operate motor vehicle under influence of alcohol. Dismissed.

The following cases were heard before the Seventh District Court in Todd County January 22, 2026.

Rafael Rocha Dos Santos, Long Prairie. 3rd degree driving while impaired. Dismissed. 3rd degree driving while impaired-blood alcohol content greater than .08 within 2 hours. Sentenced. Local confinement (364 days, stay 362 days for 2 yr credit for time served: 2 days). Supervised probation, 2 yr. Fine \$450. Fee \$105. Driving after suspension. Dismissed. Failure to produce proof of insurance. Dismissed.



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Referendum addressing educational needs

By Shane Tappe
Superintendent, Staples-Motley Schools

On behalf of the school board and staff of Staples-Motley Schools, I'm very excited to share that this spring, voters will consider a new plan to prepare our school buildings for the next generation of students. On Tuesday, April 14, our district will ask residents to consider a single referendum question to improve safety, classrooms, career training and complete improvements at our school buildings.

The referendum plan was developed directly by and for our school community. Over the past year we collected information and data. We received feedback from surveys, hosted listening sessions and open forums for parents, staff, and residents to share their priorities and concerns. Community stakeholders established committees to explore ways to enhance students' learning experiences and equip them to become influential leaders within our communities. Both staff and stakeholders consistently highlighted the necessity for schools that ensure safety, are able to support hands-on learning, and provide opportunities to learn practical career skills.

If approved on April 14, the proposed referendum will invest a total of \$42.5 million to add new space and equipment for Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes like welding, machining, small engines, and nursing assistant certification. It will also equip classrooms for both lecture and small group learning, strengthen safety and security measures at school entrances, and complete updates to activity spaces like Centennial Auditorium, football field, and track.

With the help of our financial advisors, our district was able to structure this plan so that if it is approved by voters, the current school property tax rate will not increase. As old debt from past school investments expires, new debt from this referendum would be phased in. The result will be a stable, unchanged tax rate.

Our district is committed to being transparent about why this referendum is being proposed, how it will be paid for, and how every dollar will be used to benefit students. Between now and April 14, we look forward to answering your questions and providing clear, accessible information about the referendum. You can find information about the plan, the needs of our schools, and answers to frequently asked questions on our website, SpreadingOurWings.org. Should you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. It is our priority to ensure that every resident is well-informed before voting in April.

I want to thank everyone who took the time to help shape the plan. Your perspectives have helped define our goals for the future of learning at Staples-Motley Schools. Together we can ensure our schools remain a source of pride for years to come.

Details will be shared regularly on SpreadingOurWings.org and via Staples-Motley Schools' social media, the Staples World, and school district communications. If you have immediate questions, please reach out using the contact form found at SpreadingOurWings.org/connect. Thank you for taking the time to learn more and for being a valued member of our school community.

Quote of the week

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage.”
— Anais Nin

Key issues in upcoming legislative session

By Paul Utke
State Senator

As a new year begins, so approaches another legislative session. Some folks may not know, but in each biennium we have a budget year and a bonding year – last year was a budget year, meant for setting the state budget, and this year is a bonding year, during which the legislature’s main focus will be putting together a bonding bill. Aside from the bonding bill, I also have three priorities I would like to see addressed or discussed in some capacity: fraud, healthcare and health insurance costs, and the upcoming budget deficit.

As we all know, under Democrat leadership, fraud has been incredibly pervasive in our state. In fact, due to how opaque the Walz Administration and his commissioners have been, it’s possible we never would have known the depth of the fraud had it not been for the U.S. Attorney stepping in to investigate. As of right now, they assume our state’s fraud to be hovering around \$9 billion, but frankly, I wouldn’t be surprised if that number was higher. Republicans have been sounding the alarm on the fraud long before it was uncovered – many things weren’t adding up and oversight measures were clearly being ignored. When we tried to dig, a previous Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner claimed Minnesota didn’t have a fraud problem, which is ironic considering much of the fraud we’ve found has been in DHS-run programs. The fact that none of our commissioners have been able to admit that we have a fraud problem is very telling.

To combat this fraud, there are many potential solutions we must consider. We previously discussed a bill to implement an independent Office of Inspector General (OIG) that would be focused on stopping fraud before it begins and would operate independently of state agencies so there would not be a conflict of interest. Though that bill passed in the Senate last year (with bipartisan support, mind you), Democrats in the House stopped it from passing. I’d like to see that bill revisited. We should also give Office of Legislative Auditor (OLA) reports some teeth. Right now, the OLA will investigate agencies and programs and provide findings to make those entities more efficient and compliant with state law, but oftentimes, those recommendations are not followed and there are no repercussions – we must change that. We should also reinstate legislative confirmation of commissioners. Many of our commissioners have deliberately hidden the goings on of their agencies, and that doesn’t instill confidence from legislators or the public. Yet if we can’t hold them accountable, none of that matters. These will be a few avenues we’ll explore to address fraud.

Another area I want to focus on is healthcare and insurance costs, which are through the roof due to democrats increasing fees and taxes and passing mandates onto the health plans. Every family is this state deserves high quality health care that is accessible and affordable, and that means passing legislation that increases access, gives providers more flexibility, and increases options for families seeking care. We need to do things like expand patient cost

transparency, provide support for our hospitals and make it easier for them to meet local needs by increasing beds and modifying contracts, and expand options of insurers or providers. This is a tall order, but as the Health and Human Services Republican lead, you can expect me to bring these issues up frequently.

Finally, the budget deficit...we can’t keep ignoring what we know to be true: Minnesota is headed towards a deficit due to the runaway spending by Democrats. Though we have a small surplus for 2026-2027, Minnesota is heading towards a \$5.4 billion deficit in 2028-2029 if nothing changes. Democrats spent away a \$19 billion surplus but failed to do so in a way that creates financial returns to drive our state’s economy. Now, we’re in a tough spot as spending continues to outpace revenue. Unfortunately, the proposed solution from the Walz Administration was to shift costs onto counties. I’ve said it before, but it bears repeating: a move like that would just take the burden off the state government – it would amount to no relief for you. If the state government “cuts” spending by shifting taxes, you will still be paying those taxes at a local level. This is not a real solution.

While the above are my three top issues, we’ll need to focus on other areas such as education, lowering mandates, addressing property taxes, and safety. We have a lot of work ahead of us this year, and I’m committed to working on behalf of our part of the state. As always, reach out to my office if you have any questions or concerns throughout the legislative session at Sen.Paul.Utke@MNSenate.gov.

Quote of the week

“Without data, you’re just another person with an opinion.”
— W. Edwards Deming

Minnesota electric grid at high risk of future power

Minnesota Rural Electric Association

A recent assessment by the organization responsible for monitoring the reliability of North America’s electric grid warns of potential electricity shortfalls in Minnesota’s region in the years ahead.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) is highlighting the latest Long-Term Reliability Assessment from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), which finds the Midcontinent Independent System Operator region, including Minnesota, faces elevated reliability risks as electricity demand grows and existing power plants retire.

“We need to take these warnings seriously,” said Darrick Moe, president and CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association. “Reliability is not optional in a state like Minnesota. When temperatures drop well below zero or soar during a heat wave, fami-

lies, farms and businesses depend on electricity being there when they need it.”

NERC regularly evaluates electricity supply and demand across North America. Its latest assessment, which looks ahead through the mid-2030s, shows MISO remains one of the regions with the greatest long-term reliability challenges, particularly during periods of extreme weather.

According to the report, expected growth in electricity demand is outpacing the addition of new generation resources. At the same time, dispatchable power plants that provide consistent, around-the-clock electricity continue to retire. NERC notes this combination increases the risk of resource shortfalls, especially during prolonged heat waves or extreme cold events.

While summer peak demand remains a concern, the assessment also highlights increasing winter reliability risks across much of the country, including the Upper Midwest. Cold weather events place significant strain on the grid as

heating demand rises and energy resources are tested simultaneously.

MREA continues to advocate for what it calls an “all-tech-on-deck” approach to maintaining reliability, recognizing that a diverse mix of resources is needed to meet future demand while keeping electricity affordable.

“Long-term reliability requires long-term planning,” Moe said. “That includes taking a fresh look at policies, like Minnesota’s nuclear moratorium, that limit our ability to consider proven resources that operate in all weather conditions. Today’s energy policy decisions will affect reliability in the decades ahead.”

The NERC assessment is a regional analysis and does not suggest that individual utilities are unable to meet their obligations today. However, it does underscore the importance of long-term planning, impacts from policy decisions, permitting certainty and timely investment in generation and transmission infrastructure.

DCYF addresses misinformation on state child care programs

Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is taking steps to push back on the amount of misinformation being perpetuated against essential services. Recently, DCYF launched “Fact First: The real story on services that support Minnesota,” a webpage aimed at setting the record straight. The site offers factual information to combat claims currently circulating online.

Misleading information

presented without data or context can create confusion about how public support programs actually operate. Moreover, these unsupported claims have been used as a pretext to deploy federal immigration agents into Minnesota, demand Minnesotans’ private data in violation of state and federal law, and freeze critical federal investments that make child care and groceries more affordable for Minnesota families.

“Inflammatory and misleading claims create safety risks for families, child care providers, businesses and contributes to harmful discourse about Minnesota’s immigrant communities,” said Commissioner Tikki Brown. “We remain committed to fact-based reviews that stop fraud, protect children, support families, maintain the public trust and minimize disruption to communities that rely on these essential services.”

The unprecedented uncertainty caused by the proliferation of these claims impacts Minnesotans who rely on public programs, the child care providers who provide care to Minnesota’s children, as well as

the state and county workforce charged with administering and overseeing those programs. In Minnesota, fraud claims are evaluated through established audit and investigation processes that rely on verified data and documented findings, not estimates or unsubstantiated claims.

The federal government continues to cite unverified claims as reasons to withhold funding for essential programs that support hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans. The uncertainty of funding stability creates unnecessary stress and harm to families across the state. That’s why accurate, fact-based information matters.

“Facts First” will continue to add claims as needed to help the public understand the truth behind what is being said about some of Minnesota’s public support programs. More information is available at dcyf.mn.gov/facts-first-real-story-services-support-minnesotans, to learn more about the federal actions that could affect Minnesota’s children, families, and communities and how the state is responding.

StaplesWorld

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The deadline is 12 noon, Friday. Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.

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Fairness: The Staples World tries conscientiously to report fairly and accurately. If you feel we fall short of this objective at any time, please direct your complaint to the manager whose name appears on this page.

Note to Advertisers: Advertisers should check their ad following first publication. This newspaper shall not be liable for failure to publish an ad or for the typographic error or errors in publication except to the extent of the cost of the ad for the first day's insertion. Adjustment for errors is limited to the cost of that portion of the ad wherein the error occurred. The publisher reserves the right to cancel any advertisement at any time.

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Quote of the week

“The best way to keep children at home is to make the home atmosphere pleasant, and let the air out of the tires.”
— Dorothy Parker



SM Speech team clear winners at Underwood meet

The Staples-Motley competitive Speech team dominated at their competition in Underwood on January 31. The team took first place by a wide margin in the team competition, with many individual Staples-Motley competitors placing and competing in the finals of their categories.

In the category of Creative Expression, Walker Johnson, Maddock Harvey, and Brynn Bestland took first, second and third, respectively. In Discussion, Bella Hines placed third in

the honor final and Charlotte Aldrich received a red ribbon. In Drama, Brynn Bestland second place and Raina Mikhaeil third with Kai Bestland receiving a ribbon. Christopher Mikhaeil and Matthew Jewison were sixth in Duo honor final. In Extemporaneous Reading, Walker Johnson fourth and Meredith Hoemberg first place in the honor final, with Ava Davis and Molly Hoemberg receiving ribbons.

In Great Speeches, Tristan Rendon first place and Raina Mikhaeil, third.

Caleb Bestland, fourth place in the category of Humor. In Original Oratory, Anna Hurtig was second place in the honor final and Hailey Richardt fifth. Addie Brenny won second in Poetry, Sadye Anderson fourth in the Poetry honor final. In Prose, Tristan Rendon was second, Lexi Ann fifth, Caleb Bestland first in the honor final and Jackson Alexander received a ribbon. Maddock Harvey took first in Storytelling, Jackson Bitzer fourth and Alex Tkalcich fifth in the honor final.



Ribbon and medal winners

Front row left to right: Bella Hines, Raina Mikhaeil, Brynn Bestland, Walker Johnson

Row two: Charlotte Aldrich, Hailey Richardt, Sadye Anderson, Molly Hoemberg, Tristan Rendon, Anna Hurtig, Ava Davis, Alex Tkalcich, Jackson Bitzer

Row three: Matthew Jewison, Jackson Alexander, Lexi Ann, Meredith Hoemberg, Caleb Bestland, Kai Bestland, Nadia Santos

Back: Christopher Mikhaeil, Addie Brenny, Maddock Harvey (Submitted photo)

Wiegand writes fourth murder mystery

Elaine Wiegand has written her fourth book, "Murder in a Small Town." This murder mystery is about a small town resident who returns to her hometown after a long absence to battle with the local mayor and solve missing person cases.

Wiegand is a former area resident who worked at Stern Rubber and at the school district. They moved to the area when her husband Jon opened Motley Tire. She now lives near Pillager.

The newest book is set

in Wright County, where she moved from before they moved to Motley. Her previous book, "Something Stinks in the North Woods," is set in Staples and Buffalo. Her other books are "Death of a Ranger" and "Living in a Nightmare."



Baby Steps team: front, Kelly and Gaven; back, Shelby and Charles.

Escape Room at Staples Library

The Underwater Escape Room is open through Feb. 28 at the Staples Library. Teams have 30 minutes to put the clues together, unlock the boxes and escape. Call the library at 218-894-1401 to register for a time slot. For ages 16 to adults; limit four per group; free and fun. Sponsored by the Staples Friends of the Library. (Submitted photos)



Caleb Neubert, Emily Braaten, Kathy Harren and Dave Harren.



Front: Sylvia Falk, Sharon Thew; back, Kylie Peterson and Amy Winter.

Mark Your Calendar

Feb. 12
'WALK WITH A Doc' Thursdays at 5:15 p.m., at Lake-wood Health System's main campus in Staples. Meet at the main entrance.

Feb. 15
CELEBRATE RECOVERY GROUP MEETINGS Sundays, 6 p.m., at Motley Free Methodist Church, 33 Wellwood St. E., Motley.

Feb. 17
EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE AA GROUP MTGS IN STAPLES Tuesdays, 7 - 8 p.m.,

at Church of Christ, 27343 490th St., Staples. For info., call Dan at 218-640-7228.

Menu

Senior Nutrition Program

Call mornings (218-979-4118) the Thursday before to reserve next week's meal(s) and current suggested donation info. LSS Meals - traditional older adult menu. Menu is subject to change.

LOCATED AT: Staples Hi-Rise, 615 4th St. NE, Staples. Seniors welcome to dine-in at 11:00 a.m., with meal reservations.

Staples 218-979-4118 Feb. 16 - 20

MONDAY - Spaghetti/meat sauce, green beans, hot spiced apples, dinner roll, marg., vanilla wafers, 1% milk.

TUESDAY - Chicken baked herb, rice pilaf, peas/carrots, chocolate pudding/topping, dinner roll, marg., 1% milk.

WEDNESDAY - Smothered chopped steak, baked potato, sliced carrots, apple-sauce cup, sour cream, marg., wheat bread, 1% milk.

THURSDAY - Scalloped potatoes w/ham, whole kernel corn, tropical fruit cup, peanut butter cookie, wheat bread, marg., 1% milk.

FRIDAY - Cheese egg bake, herb diced potatoes, peas/carrots, chocolate chip cookie, dinner roll, marg., 1% milk.

wk8

Free tax help offered

AARP Tax-aid will be offering free tax help to low to moderate income taxpayers at the Motley United Methodist Church on Tuesdays, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. through April 14, 2026.

Sign up for appointments at the church when it's open. Pick up the Intake Booklet to complete prior to your appointment. No walk-in appointments. The church is located at 847 3rd Ave. So., Motley.

Bring last year's income tax return, photo ID, social security cards for all family members, social security statements, railroad retirement, W-2, 1099-R, 1099 Interest, 1099-DIV, property tax statements, rent form and donations to charity.

For more information, including finding other other tax-aid locations, call 1-888-227-7669.

Staples-Motley High School recently announced their second quarter honor roll.

A Honor Roll

Grade 12

Mason Albertson, Elliot Allen, Sadye Anderson, Summer Anderson, Katriane Beach, Brynn Bestland, Ava Birkholtz, Elliot Borgenaes, Abby Brichacek, Audrey Brownell, Geoffrey Decamp, Emmalee Dobson, Isabelle Dobson, McKenzie Fletcher, Gage Foss, Elijah Greewaldt, Parker Hammer, Alexander Harren, Jameson Harvey, Alexander Holmberg, Avery Japke, Josie Jennissen, Huntington Kleinschmidt, Noah Larson, Skye Larson, Pamela Lawrence, Mason Michael, Raina Mikhaeil, Cecily Moe, Xander Moench, Ember Munger, Alexis Opelia, Riley Reese, Torence Rodrigues, Eli Rutten, Annie Schlosser, Colbe Tappe, Ruby Thoe, Livia Trif, Kyra Wolpert.

Grade 11

Brooke Bendson, Hannah Cole, Natasha Dause, Lilly Davis, Bella Hines, Thomas Johnson, Madelyn Kist, Bali Minoletti, Justin Olson, Madison Perius, Mia Pesta, Bryant Peterson, Tristan Rendon, Hailey Richardt, Carter Sarbaum, Katelyn Schotzko, Chloe Trantina, Tyson Turner, Auron Unverdorben, Paige Warren, Kylie Wilson, Cloey Wngert, Daniel Zimmerman.

Grade 10

Gage Bjerga, Andrew Black, Adalyne Brenny, Beau Carlson, Stella Daniels, Alexa Dolezal, Lauren Dolezal, Jada Ellingsen, Kain Erickson, Lexi Fishman, Leah Greenwaldt, Natalie Hanson, Sarah Kroll, Chloe Larson, Clara Maros, Jadalynn McKenna, Maci Mithun, Ally Pesola, Addison Potter, Lydia Roelofs, Alyce Scheler, Scarlett Stracek, Brooklyn Winter.

Grade 9

Charlotte Aldrich, Jackson Alexander, Chloe Badger, Garrett Bjerga, Eli Bounds, Ava Davis, Millinda DeWald, Jessica Dukowitz, Elaina Elfstrum, Brock Graton, Lexa Graves, Preston Hangge, Alea Holst, Kennedy Judd, Caleb Lopp, Aubrey Lang, Alex Leach, Olivia Lynch, Roxy Mertens, Kimberly Missey, Hudson Nani, Jackson Odden, Kaylee Perius, Taylee Reese, Owen Roline, Nadia Santos, John Schotzko, Cooper Tappe, Ryder Thompson.

B Honor Roll

Grade 12

Ashton Anderson, Hunter Beedle, Charles Dabbs, Kody Dause, Addison Fonteyn, Adrian Gomez, Reid Judd, Conner Kuhns, Wyatt Lahr, Kiya Pope, Alaina White.

Grade 11

Isabelle Becker, Joah Beedle, Corben Berg, Emersen Bettis, Leighton Bettis, Ayden Blue, Josiah

Burton, Joshua Cushing, Lillian Czechwicz, Emmitt Djuren, Allison Dukowitz, Atreyu Eagle Tail, Kaleb Harman, Maddock Harvey, Reece Headley, Aubrie Houchin, Caden Kramer, Jocelyn Lenk, Suhaila Mikhaeil, Russell Milton, Ronnie Noska, Samuel Olsen, Joseph Opelia, Philip Rapp, Evan Schultz, Logan Serich, Gavin Stevens, Landon Thotland-Quenzer, Gracie Wolpert.

Grade 10

Kylee Chenoweth, Ruben Dahlvang, Andrew Dobson, Roman Engebretson, Jesus Gallardo, Ryan Heifort, Jaida Holst, Carolyn Hoppe, Jasmyne Hove, Lyndon Laney, Karter Lynch, Nathaniel Macheel, Keira Mevissen, Landon Moench, Josiah Mumm, River Munger, Nathan Randolph, Kana Reese, Paxton Sharpe, Emilyann Sullivan, Anika Tureson, Kalee Winter.

Grade 9

Waylen Anderson, Logan Bendson, Jia qi Dai, Elliott DiGiovanni, Michael Hinson, Hannah Holker, Liam Jennissen, Michael Jewison, Ella Judd, Jacob Kamppa, Raylan Laney, William Lange, Levi Larsen, Hunter Lind, Jack Lundquist, Rylee Mevissen, Abby Miller, Anthony Mitchell, Tristan Moore, Cayden Neisen, Vanessa Nelson, Mikaela Pesta, Daniel Reese, Micah Ritter, Alexis Schwegel, Isabella Schwegel, Daniel Sturm-Hughes, Karsyn Wingert.

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50th Anniversary
Celebration for
Dale and Amber Bartylla
Sat., February 21
Ten Hi, Motley
3-7 p.m.

Hello World

ONLINE BIRTHS REMOVED
AT THE REQUEST OF LAKEWOOD
HEALTH SYSTEM.

Student Achievements

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH (UMD) has announced its 2025 Fall Semester Dean's List. To qualify, students must have achieved a grade point average of 3.50 or higher while earning a minimum of 12 letter-graded credits. Local students named include:

- Maxwell Strickland, Motley
- Jada Bentson, Pillager
- Ezra Notch, Pillager

- Aften Robinson, Staples
- Benet Robinson, Staples

HUNTER WOJDYLA Pillager, has been named to the 2025 Fall Semester Chancellor's List at the University of Minnesota Rochester. To qualify, students must have earned a 3.666 grade point average or higher and completed a minimum of 12 credits graded A-F.

Obituary

Muriel Nelson

Muriel Nelson, 85, transitioned to her heavenly home on January 31, 2026, at The Meadows in Wadena.

Memorial Services were held February 7, at Karvonen Funeral Home in Wadena with Pastor Jim Johnson officiating.

Muriel will be laid to rest at a later date.

Muriel Faye Klucas, was born June 2, 1940, to Sylvan and Dorothy (Bradford) Klucas, in Hutchinson. The Klucas family moved around a bit, so Muriel attended country schools in Eagle Bend, Buffalo Lake and graduated from Bertha High School in 1958.

Muriel met the love of her life at the young age of 16. She married Dale Nelson on March 7, 1959, at the Hewitt Church of the Nazarene. They bought an 80-acre farm one mile from Dale's childhood home and farmed in tandem with Dale's parents. They were blessed with four children: Kimberly, Jeffrey, David and Camilla. As much as Muriel cherished her family, her walk with her Lord and Savior was most important to her.

Muriel began working in the newspaper industry as a typesetter at the Wadena Pioneer Journal in 1970 and then later at The Staples World.

In 1990, Dale and Muriel sold their farm and embarked on a new adventure, moving to Warroad and worked at Marvin Windows for 13 years. They retired near Akeley and transitioned to Motley in 2010 and Wadena in 2023.

Over the years Muriel enjoyed many hobbies. She was an avid Sunday School and Bible School teacher, sang in the church choir, enjoyed gardening, sewing and knitting. Other family memories include her passing around Altoids to



those around her, giving her grandchildren "5 knee pats", playing a card game after dinner and getting the bowl of snacks out and many other memories that made her family chuckle.

Muriel is survived by children, Kim (Marcus) Edin, Jeff Nelson, Pam Nelson, Dave (Christi) Nelson and Cam (Deron) Erickson; nine grandchildren, Lance Edin, Amanda Edin, Andrew (Haley) Nelson, Anthony (Allison) Nelson, Sarina (Sheldon) Baron, Ryan Nelson, Carrie (Dallas) Ehrmantraut, Katie (Kevin) Will and Kellie (Caleb) Farber; 15+ great-grandchildren; one brother, Bob (Valera) Klucas; two sisters, Shirley (Con) VanBatavia and Lois Johnson; nieces and nephews and many friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Dale (Buzz); parents and one brother-in-law, Melvin Johnson.

The family of Muriel Nelson would like to thank The Meadows of Wadena and St. Croix Hospice for the excellent care of their mother.

Visit www.karvonenfuneralhome.com to leave memorials and condolences on Muriel's Tribute Wall.

Arrangements provided by Karvonen Funeral & Cremation Service, Wadena.

w8c A00006B2026FB11

Marvel Bartylla

Marvel Alta Bartylla, 94, of Browerville, passed away February 5, 2026, at Lakewood Health System Hospital in Staples.

Funeral services were held February 10 at the United Methodist Church in Staples.

Burial was at Evergreen Cemetery in Browerville.

Marvel was born March 14, 1931, at her grandparents' home in Moran Township to Ivan and Alta (Hable) Lovelace. She was raised on the family farm, attended country school for eight years and Clarissa High School for four years, graduating in 1950. Born to deaf parents, Marvel became fluent in sign language enabling her to communicate with both deaf and hearing people.

On June 11, 1952, she married Kenneth Bartylla at the Moran/Germania Methodist Church. Marvel and Ken purchased a farm beginning their farming career together. Marvel was actively involved in milking cows, feeding the animals, driving tractor, running to town for parts and feed, all to keep the family operation running smoothly.

Marvel spent many years playing Tripoley with the neighborhood ladies, was on a bowling league and enjoyed doing puzzles and word search books. She was fortunate to live independently in her own home until July 2025, at which time she moved to the Clara Care Center. She loved visiting with everyone, going out to eat and playing card games. Her greatest joy was spending time with her children and their families.



Marvel and Ken were blessed with four children, Beverly (Ray) Desotell, Dale (Amber) Bartylla, Bernice (Vern) Desotell, Brenda (Lynn) Hommerding; 11 grandchildren, JacyRea Almquist, Abby Burg, Kaylee Desotell, Nikki Rinerson, Tammy Maijala, ReAnn Thompson, Ryan Bartylla, Sarah Desotell, Laura Desotell, Amanda Joarnt, and Ashley Hommerding along with many great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Marvel is preceded in death by her parents; husband, Kenneth in 2001; one brother, Ronald Lovelace; one infant sister, Jane, and one grandson-in-law, Dan Almquist.

Arrangements are with the Iten Funeral Home in Browerville.

w8c A00006B2026FB11

Staples Area Church Directory

Staples

Staples Alliance
1512 8th St. NE, Staples.....218-894-2891
Jonny Olson, Associate Pastor
Sunday Worship.....9:30 a.m.
Sunday School.....11:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
AWANA.....6:00 p.m.

Assembly of God
914 3rd Ave. NE, Staples.....218-894-1081
Pastor Roy Miles
Small Groups (Bible classes for all ages).....9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship Service.....10:30 a.m.
Children's Church (Kids start in main worship service).....11 a.m.
Prayer Meeting.....5 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Sonlight (kids ages 4 yrs.-6th grade).....After school to 5:30 p.m.
Youth Group (Teens, 7th-12th grade).....After school to 5:30 p.m.

Church of Christ
27343 490th St., Staples.....218-894-2609
Pastor Barry Klein
Facebook Live
Bible School (youth and adult).....9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY:
Adult Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.

Faith Lutheran
430 12th Street. NE., Staples.....218-894-1546
Pastor Carl Larson
Sunday Worship Service.....9:00 a.m.
Sunday School and Coffee Fellowship.....10:05 a.m.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
310 4th St. NE, Staples
Church.....218-631-1598
info@marysacc.org
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314
Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310
Rev. Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Mass: Sunday.....8:30 a.m.

Seventh Day Adventist
421 Dakota Ave. SE, Staples
Pastor Joshua Jeresek
218-894-0033
Saturday Worship.....9:30 a.m.
Sabbath School.....10:45 a.m.

Thomastown Covenant
15940 251st Ave., Staples.....218-894-3923
Pastor Scott Jorgenson
Sunday Worship.....10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH.....6:30 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran
1000 4th St., NE, Staples.....218-894-2372
Pastor Vicar Paul Koehler
Sunday Divine Service.....9:00 a.m.
Sunday School and Bible Class...10:30 a.m.

United Methodist
310 5th St. NE, Staples.....218-894-2248
Sunday Worship.....10:30 a.m.
(Nursery Available for Sunday Worship)

Aldrich

Balsamlund Lutheran
19550 490th Street, Aldrich
Janet Eckman SMA.....218-837-5831
jre227@yahoo.com
Sunday Worship.....8:30 a.m.

Cushing

Bethany Lutheran
25430 Bison Rd.Cushing, MN
320-749-2140
Pastor Carl Larson
www.bethanylutherancushing.org
Sunday Worship.....9:00 a.m.
Communion.....1st and 2nd Sunday of each month

Lincoln Evangelical Free
1354 320th Street, Cushing, MN 56443
Phone: 218-575-2449
www.lincolnefree.org
Facebook Lincoln E Free
Office Hours: Tues. - Thurs., 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Senior Pastor: Don Reigstad
SUNDAY
Church Worship Gathering.....10:00 a.m.
YouTube Channel.....10:00 a.m.

Cushing Baptist

26298 Bear Rd., Cushing
Pastor Dan Holmes.....320-749-2583
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible study.....7:30 p.m.

Leader

Swan Valley Lutheran
Leader.....218-397-2470
Sandy Knight, Synodically Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament
Sunday Worship
January - July.....9 a.m.
July - January.....11 a.m.

Maple Hill Lutheran

Sandy Knight, Synodically Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament
Leader.....218-397-2470 (Rural Pine River)
Worship and Sunday School.....9:00 a.m.

Motley

Motley Free Methodist
33 Wellwood St. E
Motley 56466.....218-352-6888
Jim Johnson, Senior Pastor
Casey Reynolds, Assistant Pastor
Sunday Worship.....9:00 and 10:30 a.m.
facebook live.....9 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
AWANA.....4:00-5:30 p.m.
Youth Group.....6:00-8:00 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran

497 3rd Ave. S, Motley.....218-352-6399
Pastor Vicar Paul Koehler
Sunday School and Bible Class.....8:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....9:30 a.m.

St. Michael Catholic Church

280 1st Ave S, Motley.....218-631-1598
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314
Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310
Rev. Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Saturday.....4:00 p.m. (Dec - April)

United Methodist

847 3rd Ave. S. Lane, Motley.....218-352-6466
Pastor Greg Leslie
www.motleyumc.net
Sunday Worship Service.....10:00 a.m.
Monday AA meeting.....8:00 p.m.

Oylen

Oylen Alliance
Cty. Rds, 7 and 9, Oylen
218-472-3440 or 218-472-3316
Pastor Neal Malcore
Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....11:00 a.m.

Pillager

First Lutheran Church
Pastor Mathew Sundquist
717 River Street S, Pillager, MN
218-746-3775
Sunday Worship.....9:30 a.m.
Sunday School, 2nd and 4th Sundays.....8:30 a.m.

Casino Assembly of God

Pastor Dan Johnson
N. of Motley, Hwy. 64, E. on Cty 34 to Cty. 104.
Phone.....218-746-3839
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....7:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY.....7:00 p.m.

First Baptist

903 River Street South, Pillager
Pastor Jake Anderson
218-746-3768
curious@fbcpillager.com
Worship Gathering.....10:00 a.m.
Connection Point.....9:30 a.m.

Hewitt

Church of the Nazarene
114 Front Street, P.O. Box 146 Hewitt, MN
218-924-2028
Jim and Linda McGaffey, Pastor
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....10:45 a.m.
WEDNESDAY PRAYER.....7:00 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS)

524 Front Street, PO Box 116, Hewitt, MN
Pastor Robin Fish
Sunday Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Hewitt Community Church
Hwy. 210, Hewitt, MN
Pastor Kenneth Uhren
Sunday Worship.....10:30 a.m.

Verndale

Verndale Alliance
109 NW Brown Street, Verndale, MN 56481
218-445-5619
Senior Pastor Tony Stanley
Youth Pastor Joe Ward
Sunday Worship.....9:30 a.m.
Sunday Bible Fellowship Classes 11-11:45 a.m.

Family Life Church

402 NE Clark Drive, Verndale 218-445-5568
VerndaleFLC@gmail.com
Pastor Amos Self.....218-371-7189
Tahna Rurup, Connections & Media Pastor
Tillman Phagon, Kid's & Food Shelf Pastor
Ryan Wolfenden, Youth Pastor
SUNDAY
Youth Prayer.....9:20 a.m.
Worship Service.....10:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting.....5 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Life Groups.....6:30 p.m.

Hope Chapel Alliance

18126 County Road 7, Verndale
218-445-5643 or 218-472-3316
Pastor Neal Malcore
Sunday Worship.....9:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Family Night.....5:30 p.m.

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Bartlett Township (LCMS)

17097 460th St., PO Box 37, Verndale
Pastor Robin Fish
Sunday Worship.....9:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.

Verndale United Methodist

10 3rd Ave. SW, Verndale
218-445-5108
Pastor Jill Pawlowski
Sunday Worship.....9:00 a.m.

Central Community Church

5 miles N on Cty Rd 26 (Nimrod tar)
Pastor James Middendorf, 320-260-4952
Sunday Service.....9:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....10:30 a.m.

St. Frederick Catholic Church

20 Mason Avenue NW
Verndale.....218-631-1598
info@marysacc.org
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314 Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310 Rev. Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
MASS: Saturday.....6:00 p.m.

St. Hubert Catholic Church

Bluegrass.....218-631-1598
info@marysacc.org
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314 Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310 Father Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Sunday Service.....10:30 a.m. . (Dec. - April)
Saturday.....4:00 p.m. (May - Nov.)

Leaf River Township

The Old Country Church
Leaf River Twp., Wadena County Rd. 6
Info. 218-837-5690 Call first.

Wadena

St. Helen's Episcopal Church
22 Dayton Ave. SW, Wadena, MN
218-631-3928
Sunday Worship.....10:00 a.m.

St. Ann's Catholic Church

514 1st Street SE, Wadena(218) 631-1593
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314 Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310 Father Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Mass: Sunday.....10 a.m.

Rev. Robert Drake, Faith Lutheran Church and Bethany Lutheran Church

The other day I was having a discussion with a friend of mine. Although I like to think I'm pretty smart, I have to admit that this friend asks me questions that seem simple but they're actually quite complex.

The other day he asked me, "So, who is Jesus?" Simple, right?

I started out with some of the obvious answers: Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus is my Savior, Jesus is the Messiah. Then I answered with some of the things Jesus did and does: Jesus died for our sins, Jesus saves us from death, Jesus loves us.

But my friend smiled and said, "Yes, but who is Jesus for you?" That's when I had to take a long pause and really think about what my friend was asking me. What he really wanted to know was how my life reflects who Jesus is.

These days it's getting difficult for Christians to decide how their actions and their decisions reflect Jesus. This is true for Christians on the political right and the political left. All of us who wear the name of Jesus are wrestling with national issues that over the last few months have become local issues - even right here in Todd County.

Way back in 2012, I wrote myself a short, personal mission statement: "My life mission is to help make systems of power - which must by necessity order

the lives of people in a given society - be continually responsive to the current and future needs of its people."

I wrote that statement in response to a Bible study group, where we studied the healing miracles of Jesus. Over the course of weeks, we asked each other what Jesus was doing specifically in his miracles where he heals people. We determined that his healing miracles were responses to unjust social traditions and unfair government regulations.

Now, let me be the first to say, "Life is not fair." I get that. That's why in my mission statement, I start off by saying that systems of power, i.e., "governments," must by necessity order our lives. Jesus acknowledged this and so did the Apostle Paul. We require a firm government to help us establish order in our society.

At the same time, a government's paramount duty is to respond to the current and future needs of its people. The healing miracles of Jesus highlight both the Roman government's failure and the Jewish authorities' failure to respond to critical needs.

So that's why Jesus stepped in. I trust that Christians of all types - both liberal and conservative - can work together to respond to the current and future needs of those who live in our community.

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For the Staples World



Photogenic wrestler

Reece Headley turns his opponent from Bemidji as his mother Staci Headley photographs the team for the school district. (Staples World photo by Mark Anderson)

Cardinals sweep in tune-up for postseason

The Staples-Motley wrestling team finished their regular season with two shutouts and a commanding performance in a home quadrangular meet on Feb. 5. The Cardinals beat Blackduck/Cass Lake-Bena 78-0, Pillager 77-0 and Bemidji 54-12.

Against Blackduck/Cass Lake-Bena, Staples-Motley won by falls or forfeits, including a pin by Philip Rapp, wrestling his first varsity dual match at heavy-weight.

Against Pillager, the Cardinals had a little more resistance, but still ended up with all pins and one technical fall. This is Pillager's first season as a wrestling team, having been combined with Brainerd in the past. Although they didn't win a match against Staples-Motley, they beat BCLB 54-17 and had a lead against Bemidji before falling 47-26.

Against Bemidji, the Cardinals only had three losses, all to wrestlers ranked in the top five in Class AAA. Gage Bjerga defeated a top-three wrestler in a 10-1 win.

Heavyweight wrestler Adrian Gomez said the team is confident going into the section tournament. "We'll keep working hard over the



Camrik Tappe (right)

next weeks," he said.

As the last weight wrestled in dual matches, Gomez is ready to take the responsibility of closing out the team match if he is needed.

"I'll go out like I do and do my thing," he said.

The section team tournament is Saturday, Feb. 14, at Walker-Hackensack-Akeley High School. With no losses to Class A schools this year, the Cardinals will go in as the number one seed, but will need to be wary of Holdingford, who came within a point of them the last two years in the section final.

Team results
Staples-Motley 54, Bem-

idji 12

107 Garrett Bjerga W 17-2 tf, 114 Justin Olson L 15-3, 121 Caden Kramer W fall, 127 Camrik Tappe W 12-3, 133 Cayden Neisen W fall, 139 Gage Bjerga W 10-1, 145 Elijah Greenwaldt L 17-1 tf, 152 Beau Carlson W fall, 160 Colbe Tappe W fall, 172 Riley Reese W 16-1 tf, 189 Reece Headley W fall, 215 Zach Tabatt W fall, 285 Adrian Gomez L 7-2

Staples-Motley 77, Pillager 0

107 Gt. Bjerg W fall, 114 Olson W 16-1 tf, 121 Kramer W fall, 127 Ca. Tappe W fall, 133 Neisen W fall, 139 Gg. Bjerga W fall, 145 Greenwaldt W fall, 152 Carlson W fall, 160 Cb. Tappe W fall, 172 Reese W fall, 189 Luke Bjerga W fall, 215 Tabatt W fall, 285 Gomez W fall



Philip Rapp (top)

Cardinals earn big win, close conference loss

The Staples-Motley girls basketball team had a big win at Aitkin, 61-49 on Feb. 2, and came close to another win on Feb. 6, before falling to Barnesville 53-48. They also lost to Pelican Rapids 70-32 on Feb. 3.

Against Aitkin, Joci Lenk sparked the team in the first half by hitting three 3-pointers and two 2-point baskets. That helped the team gain a 25-18 half-time lead. In the second half, Hannah Cole and Clara Maros took over the offen-

scoring 10 and Maros eight. Aitkin also pushed the offensive pace, making nine free throws in the second half, but Staples-Motley was able to increase their lead by the end of the game.

Against Pelican Rapids, the Cardinals faced a fast team with good three point shooters. They did a good job of breaking the press, but gave up 14 three pointers in the game.

Against Barnesville, the Cardinals were behind by eight at halftime but came

They cut into the lead but never made it all the way back and lost by five.

Team results
Staples-Motley 61, Aitkin 49

Scoring: Joci Lenk 16, Chloe Larson 16, Hannah Cole 10, Clara Maros 8, Addison Potter 6, Sophia Luna 5

Staples-Motley 32, Pelican Rapids 70

Scoring: Larson 15, Maros 5, Cole 5, Luna 5, Potter 2, Staples-Motley 48, Barnesville 53

Scoring: Larson 23, Cole 9, Potter 6, Luna 5, Lenk 8

Cardinals get win, then lose on buzzer beater

The Staples-Motley boys basketball team won a conference game 72-62 against Frazee on Feb. 2, then lost a double digit lead against Barnesville to lose on a last section shot 60-58 on Feb. 6.

Against Frazee, the Cardinals led most of the game and maintained a 10 point lead at the end.

Against Barnesville, Staples-Motley pulled ahead by 16 in the first half, only to see their lead cut down to six. In

the second half, the put the lead back to 10 points early on. Missed inside shots and turnovers allowed Barnesville to come back and the Cardinals found themselves down by five with two minutes left.

In the final minute, with the team down by two, Eli Rutten drove to the basket, was fouled and made the shot and the free throw for a 56-55 lead. Barnesville tied it with a free throw, then after

a Cardinal turnover they made another free throw to make it 56-57. With five seconds left in the game, Josiah Burton set a high screen for Rutten, who again drove in and scored for a 58-57 lead with less than three seconds left. Barnesville inbounded the ball, made a pass upcourt that gave them an open three point shot at the buzzer, which they made for the win.

Our 'forest engineer' defies continental songbird decline

It's been well documented, sadly, that North American songbirds are in steep decline. Estimates vary, but they hover near an almost 30 percent decline over the last half century. Habitat deterioration and loss, agricultural practices, climate change effects, even predation by our domestic feline friends, are identified as important contributors.

Understandably, some species have been hit harder than others, with many having lost more than 50 percent of their numbers over this time. Grassland birds are said to have experienced the greatest losses. The meadowlark is one example.

Fortunately, there are exceptions to this downward songbird population trend. A few species are actually becoming more abundant. One of these is the pileated woodpecker, a bird that has been dubbed "forest engineer" for its ability to use its large, dagger-like bill to hammer, chip, and batter tree trunks, standing snags, and limbs in pursuit of insect prey, and to excavate tree cavities for nesting.

Its name pronunciation may not be obvious. Emphasis is on the first syllable, as in "PILL-ee-ate-ed." The word means to have a cap, or in its case, a crest. Not only does this largest of living North American woodpeckers use the tree cavities it hollows out for nesting, but other creatures occupy them, too. Among these are some of the smaller owls, wood ducks, squirrels, bats, and pine martens.

Growing up in a Twin City suburb, there were many woodpeckers in our neighborhood, most conspicuous in winter when they came to bird feeders for sunflower seeds and suet. Most were the small downy, and somewhat larger hairy, woodpeckers; perky, mostly black and white, the males of both species accented by a small red patch on the back of the head. Much less common then, decades ago, was the sighting of a pileated woodpecker. Far less common compared to the finches, cardinals, blue jays, chickadees, juncos, and nuthatches that were regulars

at our feeders.

Today, living in a semi-rural environment in North Central Minnesota, pileated woodpeckers are a frequent but still remarkable sight; remarkable in part because of their unusual size, distinctive silhouette, and their striking and brilliant color combination. The pileated is the largest living North American woodpecker; the size of a crow or raven, with an adult wingspan approaching 30 inches.

The pileated has a prominent scarlet crest, one that has always reminded me of artist renderings of prehistoric flying dinosaurs (pterosaurs, to be more accurate). Below its scarlet crest is a striped black and white face, the white stripe flowing down its shoulder to form a bright white fan under its wing. The pileated woodpecker's voice is loud in proportion to its size, shrill and piercing, rising and falling in pitch and volume; seeming, too, to be an echo from prehistory. Its flight habit is also distinct, a series of looping arcs in alternating glides and wingbeats.

Why has the pileated woodpecker become more abundant over the last half century and more, after a decline during the 19th and early 20th centuries? Why, when many North American songbirds are now so dramatically in decline? The most commonly given explanation is a combination of reforestation and maturing woodlands, after major deforestation that accompanied population growth and land development in those earlier times.

While mature old-growth forests have historically been its preferred habitat, pileated woodpeckers have adapted to second-growth forest and fragmented woodlands, even though that may mean living in closer proximity to human neighbors. Wooded suburban and urban neighborhoods, parks and forest preserves have contributed more available habitat.

Some point to benefits to the pileated woodpecker—and woodpeckers in general—from tree-killing diseases like emerald ash borer, Dutch elm disease, and spruce budworm, which lead to proliferation of wood-boring insects, and thus more food for woodpeckers. Not to mention greater availability of nesting sites in trees that succumb to such diseases.

Perhaps personality plays a role in its survival,

too. While pileated woodpeckers take advantage of habitat where humans may be close neighbors, they are at the same time shy and wary. You can see this if you watch one feeding at a suet station, repeatedly raising and cocking its head to survey its surroundings, and easily startled into flight by unexpected movement or sound. Its large size may also offer protection from common predators that will readily take smaller songbirds. And, as is true with so many songbirds, the supplemental foods we provide are an undeniable benefit.

But make no mistake, the availability of forest nesting and feeding sites is the critical key. A parallel in natural history underscores just how important a factor habitat is. A bird to which the pileated woodpecker is often compared is the ivory-billed woodpecker, now believed extinct. So alike were they in characteristic shape, plumage, and size—the ivory-bill somewhat larger—that it's hard to believe they were only distant relatives.

The ivory-bill thrived best in southern pine forests in areas where flooding, fire, and other natural disturbance killed trees, which in turn became breeding grounds for insects—chiefly beetle species—that this woodpecker depended upon. Deforestation gradually but steadily eroded this habitat niche, until by the 1930s they were found primarily where mature forest met flooded, timbered swamps. The combination of deforestation and wetland drainage proved too much for the ivory-bill.

Since the last confirmed, conclusive sighting in Louisiana in 1944, the ivory-bill has inspired a biological equivalent to the search for the Holy Grail. As recently as 2004 in Arkansas, and Louisiana in 2022, sightings were claimed, but were not subsequently confirmed. The last confirmed sighting of an ivory-billed woodpecker was in Cuba in 1986, a bird considered a subspecies of our own. There, too, deforestation of its limited habitat was the key reason for its demise.

Fortunately, the script is developing differently and more positively for our pileated woodpecker, a bird that is showing itself to be adaptable, and reaffirming for us the critical role that habitat plays in the survival of any species.





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TODD COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
215 First Ave. South
Long Prairie,
Minnesota 56347
320-732-4420
toddplan.zone@co.todd.mn.us

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that on **Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.** the Todd County Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing in the Commissioner's board room, 215 1st Ave South, Suite 301, Long Prairie, Minnesota.
NOTE: This meeting is again being held in-person and the public is encouraged to attend. Those who do attend in person can find parking atop the hill on the west side of the Historic Courthouse and enter through the north doors, near the American Flag and monument.
Questions? Call or email 320-732-4420 or toddplan.zone@co.todd.mn.us

- Agenda**
- Call to Order
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Introduction of Board of Adjustment Members and process review
 - Approval of agenda
 - Approval of January 22, 2026 Board of Adjustment's meeting minutes
 - The applicant is introduced
 - Staff report
 - Applicant confirms if staff report accurately represents the request
 - Site Visit Review
 - Public comment
 - Board review with applicant, staff, and public
- 1 Mathew Parker:** Section 19, Birchdale Township, Long Lake
Site Address: 11899 Bluegill Dr., Sauk Centre, MN 56378
PID: 03-0072000

1. Request to reduce the lake setback from 150' to 90.3' for a dwelling addition
 2. Request to reduce the lake setback from 150' to 90.3' for the addition of an attached garage
 3. Request to increase the height limit from 18' to 28' for non-conforming dwelling addition all in Natural Environment Shoreland Zoning District.
- 2. Stephen Neville:** Section 20, Grey Eagle Township, Big Birch Lake
Site Address: 30139 122nd Street, Grey Eagle, MN 56336
PID: 11-0046000
1. Request to increase the allowed roofed imper-

vious surface coverage from 15percent (%) to 22.7 percent (%) for dwelling addition in Recreational Development Shoreland Zoning District.
3. Variance Application Criteria Discussion
Adjournment.
Next meeting: March 26, 2026

All persons interested are invited to attend said hearing or submit a letter to be heard on these matters. **All correspondence must include name, mailing address and be received 48 hours before the date and time of the hearing.**

Todd County Board of Adjustment
Russell Vandenheuvel,
Chair

8pnc

(ABBREVIATED ADVERTISEMENT) TODD COUNTY 2026 BITUMINOUS PROJECTS

Closing date: March 3, 2026
Sealed bids will be accepted until 10:00 A.M., March 3, 2026 by the Todd County Public Works Director/Engineer and County Auditor/Treasurer at 44 Riverside Drive, Long Prairie, Minnesota 56347 for the following construction projects:

- SP 077-602-021
- SP 077-611-036
- SAP 077-648-005
- CP 26:98
- CP 26:104
- CP 77-26-01

This is an abbreviated advertisement. A full advertisement can be viewed by going to the Public Works website at <https://mn-co-todd.app.rtvision.com/one-office/bidding>

Loren Fellbaum,
Todd County Public Works
Director/Engineer

8pnc

NOTICE BYRON TOWNSHIP REGULAR MEETINGS

The Byron Township regular monthly meetings will be held the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Leader Community Hall. If inclement weather, the meeting will be held the following Monday.

Becki Rassler, Clerk
Byron Township

8pnc

PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF MOTLEY, MINNESOTA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FEE SCHEDULE AMENDMENT (RESOLUTION)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Motley, Minnesota, will hold a public hearing to consider a proposed amendment to the City's Fee Schedule, which the City Council intends to adopt by resolution, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 462.353.

Date: Monday, March 9, 2026

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Location: Motley City Hall, 316 Hwy 10 S Motley, Minnesota

The proposed amendment relates to the establishment of **escrow fees for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) applications**, including fees intended to reimburse the City for actual costs incurred for planning, engineering, legal, inspection, and administrative services associated with the review and processing of such applications.

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment prior to City Council consideration and possible adoption of the amended Fee Schedule by resolution.

The proposed Fee Schedule amendment is available for public inspection at Motley City Hall during regular business hours or by contacting the City Clerk.

All interested persons are encouraged to attend the meeting at Motley City Hall (316 Hwy 10 S) and be heard or send written comments to City of Motley, 316 Hwy 10 S Motley, MN 56466 or email comments to clerk@cityofmotley.com.

Tami Brotherton, Clerk,
City of Motley

8pnc

PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF MOTLEY, MINNESOTA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Motley, Minnesota, will hold a public hearing pursuant to

Minnesota Statutes, Section 462.357, to consider proposed amendments to the City's Land Use and Subdivision Ordinance.

The proposed amendments relate to **Sections 9.2 (Board of Adjustment) and 9.3 (Planning Commission) and address** the composition, authority, duties, and procedures of those bodies in connection with land use and subdivision matters.

Date: Monday, March 2, 2026

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: Motley City Hall, 316 Hwy 10 S, Motley, Minnesota

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment before the City Council considers and possibly adopts the ordinance amendments.

The proposed ordinance amendments are available for public inspection at Motley City Hall during regular business hours approximately one (1) week prior to the Public Hearing.

All interested persons may appear and be heard.

Tami Brotherton, Clerk,
City of Motley

8pnc

STATE OF MINNESOTA COUNTY OF TODD SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT DISTRICT COURT PROBATE DIVISION Court File No. 77-PR-26-90

Estate of Carter Dale LaPoint, Decedent

NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION OF INTESTACY, DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP, APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

It is Ordered and Notice is given that on March 9, 2026, at 10:14 a.m., a hearing will be held in this Court at 221 1st Ave. S, Long Prairie, Minnesota, for the adjudication of intestacy and determination of heirship of the Decedent, and for the appointment Mark L. McCollough, whose address is 5665 240th St., Forest Lake, Minnesota, 55025 as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in an UNSUPERVISED administration. This hearing will be administrative in which no appearances are neces-

sary Any objections filed will result in a hearing to be set at a future date. Any objections to the petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the Personal Representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate, including the power to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate.

Notice is also given that (subject to Minnesota Statutes Section 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the Personal Representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

Dated: 1/27/2026

BY THE COURT
Ellen Maas,
Judge of District Court

Kim Peterson
Court Administrator

Attorney for Petitioner
William F. Huefner
Barna, Guzy & Steffen, LTD.
200 Coon Rapids Boulevard,
Suite 400
Coon Rapids,
Minnesota 55433
Attorney License No: 238855
Telephone: (763) 780-8500
FAX: (763) 780-8500
Email: whuefner@bgs.com

7-8pnc

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• **SOURCE: 2011 Readership Survey by National Newspaper Association.**

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage:

DATE OF MORTGAGE: April 29, 2025

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$116,400.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Sondra Mevissen, as an individual

MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Zillow Home Loans, LLC

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Recorded on April 30, 2025 as Document Number A545637 in the Office of the County Recorder of Todd County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: PennyMac Loan Services, LLC by assignment recorded on October 17, 2025 as Document Number A548370 in the Office of the County Recorder of Todd County, Minnesota.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lots 10, 11 and 12, Block 9, Townsite of Hewitt, according to the plat thereof on file and of record in the office of the County Recorder in and for Todd County, Minnesota.

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 408 N MAIN ST, HEWITT, MN 56453

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Todd County, Minnesota.

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED

TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$123,012.38

TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc.

NAME OF MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: Zillow Home Loans, LLC

RESIDENTIAL SERVICER: PennyMac Loan Services, LLC

TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 35-0016100

TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 100278200006378243

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt then remaining secured by such mortgage, or any part thereof, or, if the action or proceeding has been instituted, that the same has been discontinued, or that an execution upon the judgment rendered therein has been returned unsatisfied, in whole or in part.

PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: March 19, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

PLACE OF SALE: Todd County Sheriff's Office, County Detention Center, 115 Third Street South, Long Prairie, MN 56347.

to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is six (6) months from the date

of sale.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: Unless said mortgage is reinstated or the property redeemed, or unless the time for redemption is reduced by judicial order, you must vacate the premises by 11:59 p.m. on September 21, 2026.

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: None

Dated: January 13, 2026

PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES, LLC
Mortgagee

TROTT LAW, P.C.

By: /s/
N. Kibongni Fondungallah, Esq.

Samuel R. Coleman, Esq.
Alexa Marsh, Esq.

Attorneys for Mortgagee
25 Dale Street North
St. Paul, MN 55102
(651) 209-9760
(25-1247-FC01)

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

5-10pnc

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage:

DATE OF MORTGAGE: July 1, 2003

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$57,524.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Shawn Habiger, a single person

MORTGAGEE: Washington Mutual Bank, FA

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Recorded on July 2, 2003 as Document Number 418965 in the Office of the County Recorder of Todd County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. by assignment recorded on December 26, 2006 as Document Number 446443 in the Office of the County Recorder of Todd County, Minnesota.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Beginning at the Northwest Corner of the Southwest Quarter of Section 11, Township 133 North, Range 34 West; thence Southerly 1070 feet to the point or beginning of the land to be described; thence Easterly 660 feet; thence Southerly 660 feet; thence Westerly 660 feet; thence Northerly 660 feet to the point beginning, Todd County, Minnesota.

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 49206 COUNTY 11, ALDRICH, MN 56434

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Todd County, Minnesota.

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$24,581.26

TRANSACTION AGENT: None

NAME OF MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: Washington Mutual Bank, FA
RESIDENTIAL SERVICER: Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 01-0011000

TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: None

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt then remaining secured by such mortgage, or any part thereof, or, if the action or proceeding has been instituted, that the same has been discontinued, or that an execution upon the judgment rendered therein has been returned unsatisfied, in whole or in part.

PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: April 02, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

PLACE OF SALE: Todd County Sheriff's Office, County Detention Center, 115 Third Street South, Long Prairie, MN 56347.

to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is

twelve (12) months from the date of sale.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: Unless said mortgage is reinstated or the property redeemed, or unless the time for redemption is reduced by judicial order, you must vacate the premises by 11:59 p.m. on April 2, 2027

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: Shawn Habiger

Dated: January 27, 2026

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A.
Mortgagee

TROTT LAW, P.C.

By: /s/
N. Kibongni Fondungallah, Esq.

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THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

8-13pnc

Claussen running for state representative

Staples area resident Dr. Jonathan Claussen recently announced that he’s running for state representative for District 5B, the seat currently held by Mike Wiener. Claussen has been a doctor at Lakewood Health System in Staples.

Claussen is running as a member of the Republican Party, his campaign website is ClaussenForHouse.org. He explained his decision to run for office in a press release from Feb. 5:

About Dr. Jonny:

Family is my favorite word. My personal and professional life has been deeply connected to all things family, and I want to bring that family-focused commitment to the State Capitol.

My greatest moment was marrying the love of my life, Amy, over 30 years ago. With Amy by my side, we have never chosen the easiest path, but we have always sought to follow the Lord’s leading wherever it might take us. Our marriage launched the great adventure of raising and homeschooling our eight wonderful children. Today, we are blessed with six grandchildren, with joyful anticipation of many more to come.

For over 25 years, I have served our communities as a dedicated family physician at Lakewood Health

System in Staples and Browerville. As a family doctor, I have experienced both the joys and the struggles faced by families in our district. We face challenges as a culture, an economy and in our day-to-day lives, at home, at work and in our schools. This experience has given me a unique and qualified perspective as I pursue this new endeavor of representing District 5B. I’m proud of my compassionate service in the medical field and will bring the same dedication, preparation, energy and discernment to serving in the House of Representatives.

For the past six years, I have hosted a weekly podcast titled Pushback with Dr. Jonny, offering commentary on faith, government, education, families and exploring how to engage the culture with honor to effect real change.

I also serve as president of a nonprofit organization called goFam Ministries. For over 15 years, we have traveled, taught and encouraged families, marriages and parents. On this subject, I have authored two books, Power House: Restoring the Culture of Family and The Ultimate: Restoring the Culture of Marriage, and I’m currently completing a third book titled Value the Voice: Restoring the Power of Parenting. Amy

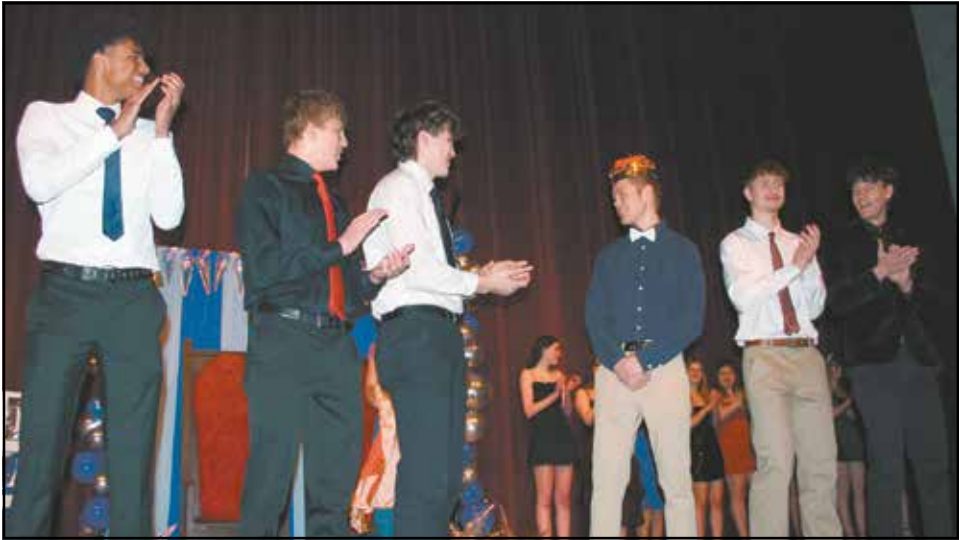


Jonathan Claussen

and I have also launched a new weekly podcast called Famology.

I am a lifelong Minnesota resident and have lived just south of Staples for over 25 years. I love playing, watching sports and I’ve run 25 marathons. I enjoy hiking, working outdoors and cheering on my wife, children and grandchildren.

Lastly, and most importantly, I feel called to this campaign. I have laid aside a successful medical practice to answer that call. The political realm is not for the faint of heart, but I feel God’s strength for such a time as this.



And the winners are...

Pictured above are the Staples-Motley SnoDaze King candidates, shortly after Gabe Kroll was crowned king. From left are Avandre Brandt, Elijah Greenwaldt, Adrian Gomez, King Gabe Kroll, Eli Rutten, Peyton Jares.

Below, the Staples-Motley SnoDaze Queen candidates react after Ava Birkholtz was crowned queen. From left are Abby Brichacek, Sadye Anderson, Cecily Moe, Queen Ava Birkholtz, Raina Mikhaeil, Pamela Lawrence. King Gabe and Queen Ava were crowned by the 2025 Homecoming King and Queen, Riley Reese and Annie Schlosser. (Staples World photos by Dawn Timbs)



King Gabe and Queen Ava

Gabriel Kroll and Ava Birkholtz were crowned the 2026 SnoDaze King and Queen at the coronation Feb. 4, at Centennial Auditorium in Staples. (Staples World photo by Dawn Timbs)

WRESTLING continued from page 1a

Team sticks together, celebrates three state athletes

Truax. “Every one of the girls came to wrestle and they did their best when it counted the most.”

Kalee Winter and Aubrey Houchin placed sixth in their section brackets and Isabelle Dobson won two matches but was one win short of placing. Even the wrestlers who didn’t place performed well. Lilly Czechowicz lost two close matches. Jocelyn Vogt lost the highest scoring match of the tournament, 23-20 in overtime. She then won by a pin and was ahead 7-0 before getting pinned and eliminated from the tournament.

“When we had all the girls advance to the second day and four of them were in the finals, we were in awe,” said coach Steve Jennissen.

The team did it with the a strong mind set and a focused goal to make it to the state tournament.

Kana Reese

Reese earned her trip to state in the semifinal match, where she won 12-11. “I knew she was a good wrestler, but I didn’t know she would be that good, she was very strong,” said Reese.

Behind 3-1 in the second period, Reese scored a takedown and a four point near fall to go up 8-3. She got reversed and gave up a near fall of her own to enter the third period down by one. She chose the top position and worked for more than a minute before finally getting a four point near fall to take a three point lead.

“I got her with an arm bar,” said Reese.

A reversal late in the match only gave her opponent two points. With at 12-11 lead from the bottom position, Reese refused to get turned again.

“I wasted time and ran out the clock,” said Reese.

“Kana gave it her all when she needed it,” said Truax, “she wasn’t feeling well so she didn’t do as well in the final.”

With a loss in the final, Reese advanced to state because the third place match was won by the girl she had beaten in the semifinal, so no true second match was needed.

Knowing that she was headed to state, Reese said “It was exciting, my family was there to watch, they were excited for me too.”

Truax said “After the match, Kana and her dad shed some tears of joy together. A lot of the girls at the tournament got emotional after making it to state.”

Leah Greenwaldt

Greenwaldt also had her best match in the semifinal. Facing the top seed in the tournament, she earned the first takedown and rode out the first period.

“I knew the semifinal was the match I had to win, I was focused on that. The key was you had to want it more,” said Greenwaldt.

Although she was ridden out the entire second period, Greenwaldt wasn’t worried because she was still in the lead. In the third period,

she started in the down position again and eventually earned a reversal and a near fall.

“I got her in a really scary cradle,” said Greenwaldt, which earned her four points but if it slipped, it could have gone the other way. She made it stick and her 9-0 victory sent her to the final.

In the championship match, Greenwaldt said she already knew she was going to state because she had beaten both of the third place contestants, so it was a little bit of a letdown and she didn’t have that same mindset to win at all costs.

“I could have beaten her, but on that day, after I already met my goal of qualifying for state, I didn’t have the goal to beat her,” said Greenwaldt.

Again, Truax said it is difficult to wrestle well after shedding tears of joy.

Anika Tureson

Tureson dominated her bracket as the fourth seed in the tournament. The only point she gave up was on an escape in her 17-1 technical fall in the first round.

“I let her out because I was kind of choking her at the edge of the mat,” Tureson said about the only point she allowed in the entire tournament.

Tureson believes she kept winning because of her attitude towards the entire section meet. “I had a good mindset and had a good routine,” she said. “I was more stressed for my teammates’ matches than I was for my own.”

In the semifinal, Tureson faced the top seeded wrestler who is ranked eighth in the state. She scored a takedown and near fall in the first period.

“I had her on her back for a good 30 seconds,” said Tureson, but the referee wouldn’t call the pin.

She finished it in the second period with a reversal, near fall and pin to reach the final.

In the title match, Tureson faced a taller wrestler. “I always seem to get the tall ones,” she said.

Again she took her positive mindset into the match.

“My grandpa told me that anyone can be beat,” said Tureson. “I told that to my teammates and that helped us a lot.”

She won it quickly with a first period takedown and pin.

“I just went out and did my stuff, it felt pretty awesome,” said Tureson about becoming the section champion.

Maddie Kist

As the eighth seed in the tournament, Kist won her first match, then faced the top seed. There was no scoring in the first period, then her opponent chose the bottom position for the second period. After a minute of wrestling, Kist turned her and earned the pin.

In the semifinal, she pinned the fourth seeded wrestler to reach the title match.

She got pinned in the

final and had to wrestle a true second match, where she also lost to place third.

Beating the top seed and reaching the final is often a path to success because the top seed should be able to win third place, but that wasn’t the case in this tournament.

“Watching our girls take out the number one seeds was amazing,” said Truax. “But it kind of broke them, they didn’t come back strong after we beat them.”

Truax said the devastating disappointment of Kist not making state after reaching the finals was lessened by the support of her teammates.

“How Maddie held herself up is pretty impressive,” said Truax. “Everyone on this team holds each other up, they are all responsible for each other.”

He noted that at every tournament, the entire team shows up to watch every one of their teammates’ matches, and they split up evenly if two are wrestling at one time.

State meet

Following the tournament, Tureson said the girls all congratulated each other on doing so well at the section meet, but it took a little time to realize the significance of qualifying for the state tournament.

“It feels unreal, I don’t think it really set in,” said Tureson.

As they headed back to Staples, the team started to realize what they had done.

“We let loose on the way back,” said Greenwaldt, as they started yelling, playing their team song and looking forward to state wrestling.

The state tournament has a new format this year, with boys team rounds on Wednesday, Feb. 25. Girls wrestling only has an individual tournament, not a team tournament.

Individual rounds for girls and boys will start at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26 with the boys team matches finishing that afternoon and evening.

All individual brackets will be completed the next two days, Friday, Feb. 27 and Saturday, Feb. 28.

The State meet is at the same location in St. Paul, formerly called the Xcel Center, now renamed Grand Casino Arena.

The three Staples-Motley girls all expect they will have an opportunity to win some matches at state and earn a medal, which goes to the top six. But this is their first state tournament, so they are looking forward to the experience just as much as winning.

Team results

Section 7 individual tournament

100 Kana Reese 2-1, 2nd place
106 Isabelle Dobson 2-2
112 Leah Greenwaldt 2-1, 2nd place
118 Lilly Czechowicz 0-2
124 Maddie Kist 3-2, 3rd place
130 Jocelyn Vogt 1-2
136 Kalee Winter 2-3, 6th place
170 Anika Tureson 3-0, 1st place
190 Aubrey Houchin 1-3, 6th place

Wadena County receives Alzheimer funding

Wadena County Public Health is one of 12 health departments nationwide selected to receive funding, education and technical assistance from the Alzheimer’s Association. The support will help strengthen local efforts to promote brain health and address dementia-related challenges.

The grant and additional resources are provided through the Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map Strategist Program. Led in partnership with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the program equips local health departments with tools and resources to establish a part-time Road Map Strategist, a public health professional who serves as a systems-change leader advancing population health approaches from the

HBI Road Map for State and Local Public Health, 2023-2027.

“Wadena County Public Health is excited to be included in this elite group of local health departments,” said Sarah Ness, Wadena County Public Health Director. “This grant and additional resources will help us support the cognitive well-being of our community while expanding services for individuals and families affected by dementia.”

Road Map Strategists will work in coordination with public health partners, including health systems. With support from the Alzheimer’s Association, NACCHO and a peer network, Strategists will conduct a public health needs assessment, build partnerships, increase internal capacity and train their colleagues to address demen-

tia as a public health issue.

“Public health is instrumental in promoting brain health, increasing access to diagnostic services, and supporting people living with dementia and their caregivers,” said John Shean, MPH, director of the Healthy Brain Initiative. “We’re seeing more local public health take on this work, and we’re excited to collaborate with these 12 new city and county health departments as they lead the way to improving health in their communities.”

About the Healthy Brain Initiative

The Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) improves understanding of brain health as a central part of public health practice. The initiative is guided by the vision that everyone deserves a life with the healthiest brain possible. The HBI creates and supports partnerships,

collects and reports data, increases awareness of brain health, supports populations highly impacted by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, and promotes the use of its Road Map Series. The HBI Road Map Series provides actionable steps to promote brain health, address cognitive impairment and meet the needs of caregivers.

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