



Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, Nov. 27, 2020
Volume 25, Issue 24
Est. 1995

Town Crier

Market canceled due to Covid-19

Sartell Farmers Market canceled for Dec. 5 due to the current Covid situation. If you need any items from our vendors, please feel free to contact them directly. Contact information available on sartell-farmersmarket.org or Facebook.

Be a Santa to a senior with Home Instead

Home Instead is looking for volunteers to Be a Santa to a Senior. Home Instead is teaming up with Amazon Business to create a contactless gift-giving experience for volunteers and recipients. Visit BeASantatoaSenior.com and enter your zip code to view Wish Lists for local seniors in the area which are available on Amazon Business through Dec. 11. A personalized greeting can be included with the gift which will be shipped directly to the senior. Be a Santa to a Senior trees also can be found at Lunds & Byerly's, 2510 W. Division St., Waite Park, MN 56301.

Give thanks to veterans and service members

United Way of Central Minnesota invites you to help celebrate the upcoming holiday season with those service members near and far. Through November, please take two minutes to write a thank you note, share a story or simply express your gratitude for veterans and service members by leaving a message. These messages will be distributed locally as well as mailed to our deployed troops. Visit <https://www.unitedwayhelps.org/volunteer> to complete your online card today! Contact Mary, United Way of Central Minnesota at mkrippner@unitedwayhelps.org.

Crisis nursery has holiday needs

Lutheran Social Service Crisis Nursery is in need of the following items: Diapers (newborn, size 4-6, various sizes of pull-ups), and children's winter wear sizes 4T-12 years. This includes coats, hats, gloves and boots 0-12 years old. Contact LSS Crisis Nursery to set up a drop-off time at 320-654-1090.

Schools seeking reading tutors

Sartell and St. Joseph schools are in need of reading tutors for the current school year. Reading tutors are in higher demand this school year due to challenges related to distance learning. Three Minnesota Reading Corps tutors are still being sought for Sartell and St. Joseph schools. Anyone interested in serving is encouraged to apply by Dec. 18 at readingandmath.net or by calling 866-859-2825.



photo by Carolyn Bertsch

Many hands make light work

A decorating crew attaches several strings of lights to a pole Nov. 21 for the upcoming Country Lights Festival. They are (left to right) Scott Schmitz; Stephanie Schwartztraub; Holden Schwartztraub, 16, and Chip Schwartztraub, all of Sartell.

Night school will help students who fall behind

by Mike Knaak
news@thenewsleaders.com

Sartell High School students will have an additional opportunity to keep up with their studies and make progress toward graduation, thanks to a new, expanded program.

Starting in December, ninth-through 12th graders will be

able to attend "Night School," from 4-6 p.m., on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

For years, juniors and seniors could participate in SAIL - Sartell Area Incentive Learning, but Night School adds the younger students and will be taught in-house instead of in cooperation with the St. Cloud school district.

"We looked at the numbers and identified the need," Principal Sascha Hansen said.

Disruptions to traditional learning caused by the pandemic highlighted the need. After starting the school year in a mix of learning models, all Sartell-St. Stephen students will be distance learning through at least Jan. 8.

"With the amount of students we recognized fourth quarter last year and this year after first quarter, we asked how can we get more of our kids back on track," Hansen said.

Courses offered will be determined by student need but are expected to include core **School • page 2**

Citizen of the Year, education professional honored

by Heidi L. Everett
news@thenewsleaders.com

With more than 18,000 residents in Sartell, one might think it's hard to stand out. The Sartell Chamber of Commerce's annual Choice Awards proved otherwise Nov. 12 when Citizen of the Year, Education Professional of the Year and others were honored.

Citizen of the Year

Jessica Lundsetter remembers what it was like in March.

"The stores had empty shelves and were running out of everything from toilet paper to dry goods," she said.

It was the early days of the pandemic, before COVID-19 had claimed the lives of more than 1.3 million worldwide and more than 3,100 in Minnesota.

"Five of us came together at



contributed photo

Sartell Citizen of the Year Jessica Lundsetter completes Care Kits at the CLC Free Community Store.

Celebration Lutheran Church and talked about how can we help families, the elderly and those who are immunocompromised and couldn't go to the store to get toilet paper and

other items," she said.

They decided to ask members of the community to share their extras.

"If we can ask our neighbors to give extra," she said, "we

could be the bridge to get these products to the people who need it."

Lundsetter said it took over a month to really get going. Once it got rolling, "The giving side of it just started pouring in. It was amazing," she said. With donated items filling church classrooms, the CLC Free Community Store was born.

The CLC Free Community Store is a place where people who have lost their jobs or are facing tough times due to COVID can get needed essential items.

Lundsetter is coordinator of the store, and with the help of three care-team members, Taryn Gentile, Tyler Malotky and Dustin Tomhave, she creates Care Kits and fills tubs with food items, paper products, hygiene products and ba-

Awards • page 3

Audit

from front page

This year the district's general fund balance increased by \$1.9 million to 11 percent.

Three major categories accounted for the expense drop.

Instructional expenses decreased because of distance learning as the district adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as what the auditors called "conservative" budgeting. Capital outlay and sites and buildings accounts decreased because of projects planned but not completed during the bud-

get year.

Some 87 percent of the district's \$44.2 million general fund revenue comes from the state of Minnesota. Local property taxes provide the majority of the rest.

While the auditors found no significant compliance issues, they did flag one practice.

The auditors noted a lack of segregation of accounting duties for handling bank accounts, receiving payments and writing checks. This is a common and ongoing issue for smaller governments where a small group of people have to perform many jobs.

The auditors concluded "due to the number of accounting

staff needed to properly segregate all of the accounting duties, the cost of obtaining desirable segregation of accounting duties can often exceed benefits which could be derived... Management has determined a complete segregation of accounting duties is impractical to correct."

The firm of BerganKDV completed the audit, which was approved unanimously by the board.

In another financial matter, the board voted to increase pay for substitutes to attract more applicants and be more competitive with surrounding districts.

Pay for teachers will increase

from \$120 to \$130 per day, \$5 more than St. Cloud and Sauk Rapids-Rice school districts pay. The district's retired teachers who return as substitutes will be paid \$140 a day.

The pay for paraprofessionals will increase from \$14 per hour to \$15.50 per hour.

"This will help our substitute situation to get substitutes who are already in the market," said Krista Durrwachter, director of Human Services. "There are not subs everywhere like there used to be."

Substitute pay was last increased three years ago. The new rates will be effective Dec. 1. The board unanimously approved the new pay scale.



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if you would like to be in the business directory.

School

from front page

subjects such as English, algebra, world history, biology, human geography, probability and statistics and physical education.

The Night School classes,

conducted online initially, will feature smaller class sizes, eight to 10 students, as well as more individualized instruction.

To identify students who need academic help, the high school has paired administrators with counselors to reach out to families where students are missing school or getting behind on assignments.

The goal, Hansen said, is to have 100 percent of seniors earn enough credits for graduation.

"We want to come up with ways, so kids don't have this deep hole they can't dig out of," Hansen said. "We want them to have the opportunity to graduate on time with their peers."



Tri-CAP, Inc. is seeking a Director of Finance

The mission of Tri-CAP is to enhance and expand opportunities for the economic and social well being of our residents and our communities.

We are looking for the ideal person to lead our agency's long-term financial objectives and oversee day to day finance activities. This position is responsible for financial compliance and an annual agency operating budget of approximately \$9.0 million. This person has integrity, creativity, and a passion for our mission and core values. The leader we seek has accounting experience, non-profit grants management experience, is highly motivated & organized, with critical thinking skills and the ability to problem-solve. This person will work collaboratively with agency leaders in a supportive, energized work environment and will lead a motivated team of staff to meet agency goals.

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To apply: Apply online at www.tricap.org, or email hr@tricap.org or call 320-251-1612 to request an application. Include cover letter, resume and professional references with application submission. Position is open until filled.

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Newsleader staff members have the responsibility to report news fairly and accurately and are accountable to the public. Readers who feel we've fallen short of these standards are urged to call the Newsleader office at 320-363-7741. If matters cannot be resolved locally, readers are encouraged to take complaints to the Minnesota News Council, an independent agency designed to improve relationships between the public and the media and resolve conflicts. The council office may be reached at 612-341-9357.

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Awards

from front page

by-care items. These tubs are placed outside of the church seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and people in need can just show up to get supplies.

"It's anonymous," Lundsetter said. "You can come in the middle of the night if you need to."

The CLC Free Community Store also has a team of 10 drivers who deliver prepackaged kits to homes. Currently, these Care Kits include seven different food kits and a hygiene kit that has toilet paper, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, a toothbrush and toothpaste. If needed, deodorant and women's feminine hygiene products are add-ons. A household cleaning kit is available as well as a baby care kit with diapers and wipes.

All of this is made possible through donations.

"I'm behind the scenes coordinating and managing inventory that is stored in the church," Lundsetter said. "This might be going just a few streets over. That's what people love to know, that they are helping their neighbors."

Lundsetter hopes it (donations) will continue. "The need is there, and people want to give," she said.

On their busiest weeks so far, 25 families requested kits. The store has given out thousands of pounds of food and has helped hundreds of families with individual items.

"It's been really eye-opening," Lundsetter said. "It's way more than we would've ever expected."

Currently, Lundsetter doesn't work outside of the home, although she was educated as a therapist. She has a high-school student, Ella, and a 3-year-old, Miles. The flexibility in her schedule allows her to focus on the store.

"I feel like this is something that I was made for in this moment," she said.

"It's been amazing to see the community come together like this," Lundsetter said. "I get to witness this every day. It's people saying we don't want our neighbors to be without or to struggle more than they have to right now."

Lundsetter also was a finalist in the St. Cloud Financial Credit Union's 2020 Changemaker Awards in November.

Ring bells for Salvation Army

Ring a bell at one of their iconic red kettles now through Dec. 24 to raise funds that change lives all year long. Volunteers are the difference between an empty kettle and one that raises about \$30 per hour - enough to provide a family with two bags of groceries. Call Laura at 320-257-7437 or visit <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/northern/stcloud/volunteer/> to schedule a time to ring bells.

Education Professional of the Year

At 3:45 a.m., Rosie Warzecha's alarm goes off. She has her coffee and cereal and then "leaves the yard by 5:30" to get to her job as head custodian at Pine Meadow Primary School in Sartell by 6 a.m. She unlocks the building, checks all the doors, windows and boilers, and salts the sidewalks in winter. Then she gets to cleaning the classrooms.

She's been doing this for 21 years, Monday through Friday.

"I love my job. I love the kids. I love coming to work every day," she said.

Warzecha also responds to the fire alarms that are triggered in the middle of the night. On weekends, she does routine checks of the buildings and boilers too.

"I have high expectations when it comes to keeping our school building clean," she said. "This year especially, I am very aware of the importance of my profession, and I do not take my responsibilities lightly. My team does an amazing job."

Others are also aware and appreciative.

Warzecha received the Education Professional of the Year award. She was nominated along with nine others and was "speechless" when she won.

"I thought, 'They're not going to give it to a head custodian!'" she said.

Sara Nelson, principal at Pine Meadow, disagrees. In an email to the school, she noted, "Rosie's tireless efforts to provide the best environment possible for every child who enters PMPS is a testament to her commitment to education and excellence. We are so lucky to have her on our team."

Warzecha started her career in the hospitality industry, cooking for weddings and events at local banquet facilities. In 1999, she changed careers to become a custodian.

"I wanted to be amongst the

people," she said.

In 2007, she was promoted to head custodian.

Warzecha sees herself as a role model, first by demonstrating how to treat one another.

"I want the students to know they can be kind and respectful," she said.

She also is living proof that females can be successful in careers that are often considered for males.

"You don't have to be a male to do this job," she said.

When asked how she thinks people would describe her, she said, "I'm a hard worker. That started with my parents. We were brought up to work hard."

Her life outside of school supports that. In addition to full-time jobs, she and her husband have a holiday tree farm and more than 130 ewes.

She doesn't have plans to slow down anytime soon.

"Sara [the principal] said I'll know when it's time," Warzecha said. "This is my home. I just love it here. The people here are family."

In addition to Lundsetter and Warzecha, other Sartell Choice honorees include:

- Chamber Member of the Year: Tim Elness, W. Gohman Construction
- Small Business of the Year: Sartell Vibe
- Large Business of the Year: Sartell Pediatrics
- Healthcare Professional of the Year: Dr. Cody Wendlandt, Sartell Family Medicine

"The Sartell Choice Awards were nothing short of spectacular," said Nikki Sweeter, executive director of the Sartell Chamber of Commerce. "We had the most nominees we've ever had. I think the community realized this year, more than ever, we need to focus on the people and businesses who are doing good in our community and hear their stories. That is what this event is about."



contributed photo

Rosie Warzecha was named Sartell's Education Professional of the Year Nov. 12. She is head custodian at Pine Meadow Primary School.

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m DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		Division of School Finance 1500 Highway 36 West Roseville, MN 55113-4266		District Revenues and Expenditures Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 and FY 2021				ED-00110-43
General Information: Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.10, requires that every school board shall publish the subject data of this report.								
District Name:		Sartell-St. Stephen				District Number:		748
Fund	FY 2020 Beginning Fund Balances	FY 2020 Actual Revenues and Transfers In	FY 2020 Actual Expenditures and Transfers Out	June 30, 2020 Actual Fund Balances	FY 2021 Budget Revenues and Transfers In	FY 2021 Budget Expenditures and Transfers Out	June 30, 2021 Projected Fund Balances	
General Fund/Restricted	\$ 3,478,049	\$ 3,693,064	\$ 3,007,516	\$ 4,163,597	\$ 2,995,254	\$ 2,667,932	\$ 4,490,919	
General Fund/Other	\$ 7,146,671	\$ 40,856,378	\$ 39,340,643	\$ 8,662,406	\$ 43,890,405	\$ 43,965,898	\$ 8,586,913	
Food Service Fund	\$ 497,690	\$ 2,206,557	\$ 2,267,190	\$ 437,057	\$ 2,400,500	\$ 2,397,883	\$ 439,674	
Community Service Fund	\$ 631,963	\$ 1,413,608	\$ 1,211,969	\$ 833,602	\$ 1,358,876	\$ 1,322,470	\$ 870,008	
Building Construction Fund	\$ 25,043,999	\$ 421,553	\$ 20,801,158	\$ 4,664,394	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,247,999	\$ 2,418,395	
Debt Service Fund	\$ 1,694,459	\$ 7,608,978	\$ 7,545,260	\$ 1,758,177	\$ 7,465,907	\$ 7,384,460	\$ 1,839,624	
Trust Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Internal Service Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 758,598	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 508,598	
* OPEB Revocable Trust Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
OPEB Irrevocable Trust Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
OPEB Debt Service Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Total - All Funds	\$ 38,492,831	\$ 56,200,138	\$ 74,173,736	\$ 21,277,831	\$ 58,112,942	\$ 59,986,642	\$ 19,154,131	
Long-Term Debt		Current Statutory Operating Debt per Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.81						
Outstanding July 1, 2019	\$ 108,399,724	Amount of General Fund Deficit, if any, in excess of 2.5% of expenditures 06/30/2020						
Plus: New Issues	\$ 1,710,210	\$ -						
Less: Redeemed Issues	\$ 5,500,000	Cost per student - Average Daily Membership (ADM) 06/30/2020						
Outstanding June 30, 2020	\$ 104,609,934	Total Operating Expenditures						
Short-Term Debt		\$ 43,268,620.00						
Certificates of Indebtedness	\$ -	FY 2020 Total ADM Served + Tuitioned Out ADM + Adjusted Extended ADM						
Other Short-Term Indebtedness	\$ -	FY 2020 Operating Cost per ADM						
		\$ 10,582.02						
<i>The complete budget may be inspected upon request to the superintendent.</i>								
Comments:								

Sartell-St. Stephen distance learning gets generally good marks

by Mike Knaak
news@thenewsleaders.com

A majority of parents are satisfied with how Sartell-St. Stephen schools are handling hybrid and distance learning this fall, but results of the district's latest survey shows room for improvement in communication.

The district received 1,270 re-

sponses, representing about a third of all students during the survey period, Oct. 29-Nov. 13. Parents were asked to fill out one survey for each child. School board members reviewed the results Nov. 16.

Because of COVID-19, the district opened the school year with a combination of in-person and hybrid instruction. On Nov. 16

the district switched all students to distance learning when infections locally increased dramatically. Distance learning will continue until at least Jan. 8.

Almost 64 percent of responses described the overall school year as Excellent or Good, with another 28.7 percent rating it is Fair. When asked to describe the adjustment to this school year, 45 percent said they are doing well while another 42.5 percent said they are adjusting, but it has been difficult.

Along with specific responses, the survey solicited detailed comments. Kay Nelson, assistant superintendent, said there were notes of gratitude for staff. She called those comments "heartwarming. The community recognizes what our staff is doing."

This is the fourth survey the district has conducted since March; how to keep all students challenged and moving ahead is a constant topic.

While more than 70 percent of respondents rated the amount of homework as Just Right, about equal numbers of parents thought it was Too Much (11.4 percent) or Too Little (9.8 percent).

Some 73.8 percent of parents said homework was Appropriately Challenging while 6.5 percent rated it Too Challenging and 10.1

percent said it was Not Challenging Enough. Parents want more work for higher achieving students who appear to be easily finishing their work in a short period of time, Nelson said.

"We need to think about who we are not challenging enough as well as those who think the work is too challenging," Nelson said.

When rating the communication with families, nearly 90 percent rated the overall communication from the district as Just Right, while the Just Right rating for schools fell to 84.6 percent and the rating for individual classrooms fell to 76.1.

Nelson said the rating of 22.6 percent as Too Little for classrooms is a concern. Staff has been asked to work on improving that.

School board member Patrick Marushin said the survey results on communication mirrored his experiences with his own four children who are in first, third, sixth and eighth grades.

Board member Amanda Byrd wondered if the classroom communication rating was consistent across all grades. Byrd and Marushin speculated that parents see less communication for their students in older grades. Byrd said the communication level is about the same as in

"normal times."

Nelson said administrators need to look closely at the survey results to see how grade level affects the communication rating.

The amount of time spent on distance learning each day varies with 9.9 percent of respondents spending two to three hours; 17.1 percent spending four to five hours; 18 percent spending five to six hours; and 22.5 percent spending six to seven hours.

The vast majority of students are doing school work during typical school hours with 97 percent studying between 7-10 a.m. and/or between 1-4 p.m. (36 percent). Only 6 percent hit the books between 7-10 p.m.

The survey does not help answer the question of when students will return to classrooms. Current health data indicates that won't be any time soon.

The district's most recent average 14-day case rate is 133.6. The Stearns County case rate updated Nov. 19 is 186.33. To return all students to even a hybrid mode, the case rate would have to drop below 30 per 10,000 people.

The district's COVID-19 dashboard at www.sartell.k12.mn.us/COVID19_coronavirus tracks cases of student and staff infection. It's updated every Thursday.

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VACATION/TRAVEL

DO WARM WINTERS SOUND GOOD?? Bring your RV down to the warm Rio Grande Valley. J-5 RV Park in Mission Tx. will welcome you with a country setting and friendly people. We have a special for 1st time visitors. We are following guidelines to keep everyone healthy and taking precautions to protect our community. Phone us at 956-682-7495 or 515-418-3214. Email info@j5rvparktexas.com Tom and Donna Tuttle, Managers. (MCN)

Blotter

If you have a tip concerning a crime, call the Sartell Police Department at 320-251-8186 or Tri-County Crime Stoppers at 320-255-1301, or access its tip site at tricitycrimestoppers.org. Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for a crime.

Nov. 10

7:15 p.m. Crash. First Street NE and Third Avenue NE. A tow truck lost control turning and struck a street sign. A towing service came to winch the vehicle out and public works was notified of the sign needing to be replaced. No further action needed.

Nov. 11

11:30 a.m. Citizen contact. Sartell. One of Sartell Police Department's Reserve Officers delivered welcome packets to new members of the community.

Nov. 12

11:45 a.m. Pinecone Road S. and Sundance Road. Traffic stop. An officer initiated a traffic stop after observing a vehicle with no rear plate displayed. Upon the officer making contact with the driver, it was found the driver did not have their driver's license in possession while behind the wheel. The driver was given a verbal warning for the infractions.

Nov. 13

6 p.m. Theft from vehicle. CR 120. A complainant called requesting an officer's assistance after they noticed their phone was stolen from

their vehicle. The complainant stated they may have left their vehicle unlocked while in a store. The officer contacted the business to retrieve video surveillance of the parking lot in an attempt to find the suspect.

Nov. 14

9 p.m. Alarm. 14th Avenue E. An audible and motion-alarm sensor was tripped in a business. Officers responded and cleared the building. Officers attempted to make contact with a keyholder, but there was no response. No further action was needed.

Nov. 15

7 p.m. Stolen vehicle. River Oaks Lane. A complainant called to report a suspicious vehicle parked in the area. Officers ran the vehicle information through dispatch, and it was confirmed stolen. The vehicle was associated with a crime that occurred in St. Cloud. There were no suspects in the area, and the vehicle was towed. St. Cloud Police Department was notified. No further action was needed.

Nov. 16

9 p.m. Disorderly. Second Street S. Officers were dispatched to a disorderly male at a business. Upon arrival, an officer met with the manager who stated the male party was acting belligerent, and employees felt unsafe serving him. The male became violent as he was leaving, pushed the manager and slammed the door. The manager did not want to press charges. Employees were advised to call back if the male party returned.

Catholic schools move to distance learning

by Heidi L. Everett
news@thenewsleaders.com

St. Joseph Catholic School and St. Francis Xavier Catholic School in Sartell, along with their sister schools in the Catholic Community Schools system, will begin distance learning Nov. 30 with the hopes for a possible return to in-person learning Jan. 19.

"We know people will be gathering over the holidays, although hopefully to a lesser degree," said Scott Warzecha, president of CCS. "For this reason, our projected return date has been calculated to get us through the New Year weekend with an additional 14 days following it to ensure we are giving our students the best possible outcome for returning safely to in-person learning."

COVID-19 case growth in the

St. Cloud metro area is among the highest in the nation.

Catholic Community Schools is a consolidated school system in the St. Cloud metro area that includes: St. Francis Xavier Catholic School (Sartell), St. Joseph Catholic School (St. Joseph), All Saints Academy (St. Cloud), Cathedral Middle and High School (St. Cloud), Holy Cross School (Pearl Lake/ Marty), St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School (St. Cloud), St. Katharine Drexel School (St. Cloud), St. Mary Help of Christians School (St. Augusta) and St. Wendelin's Catholic School (Luxemburg/St. Augusta).

Sartell-St. Stephen public schools moved fully to distance learning Nov. 16. St. Cloud public schools will move fully to distance learning Nov. 30.

Newsleaders seeks GoFundMe donations

During these turbulent times, advertising support has dwindled. The Newsleaders wants to continue providing up-to-the-minute local coverage both on our website and in print. Please help support the Newsleaders by viewing/contributing to our GoFundMe page on Facebook. Thank you to our recent contributors! Any amount is greatly appreciated.



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Community Calendar

Is your event listed? Send your information to: Newsleader Calendar, 1622 11th Ave. SE., St. Cloud, MN 56304., e-mail it to news@thenewsleaders.com. Most events are listed at no cost. Those events are typically free or of minimal charge for people to attend. Some events, which have paid advertising in the Newsleaders, are also listed in the calendar and may charge more.

Contact organizations directly for virtual meeting links/locations and other possible changes due to COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

Tuesday, Dec. 1

Memory Writers group develops topics and turns in stories. 10 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S, St. Cloud.

Country Lights Festival opens, Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

Wednesday, Dec. 2

Advocates for Independence, 2-4 p.m., Independent Lifestyles, 215 Benton Drive N., Sauk Rapids. 320-529-9000.

Sartell-St. Stephen school board work session, 6:30 p.m., Middle School Media Center, 748 Seventh St. N.

St. Stephen City Council, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 2 Sixth Ave. E.

Saturday, Dec. 5

Sartell Winter Farmers' Market, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

Monday, Dec. 7

Sartell Lions Club, 6:30 p.m., upstairs of Blue Line Sports Bar and Grill, 1101 Second St. S., Sartell. 320-267-2591.

Tuesday, Dec. 8

Sartell Chamber of Commerce, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., The Waters Church, 1227 Pine Cone Rd.

Holistic Moms Network, 7-8:30 p.m., Good Earth Co-op, 2010 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud. 320-252-2489.

National Alliance on Mental Health, 7-8:30 p.m., Calvary Community Church, 1200 Roosevelt Road, St. Cloud. The group helps parents raising a child with mental illness learn coping skills and develop problem-solving skills. 320-654-1259.

Wednesday, Dec. 9

Breakfast Club, 9-10 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S. Free for members, nominal fee for nonmembers. 320-253-8424.

Customer Service Representative/Scheduler

Owned by 13 rural electrical cooperatives, Heartland Security installs and services alarm systems and cameras in homes and businesses in central, western and southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. We are seeking the right candidate to serve as a customer service representative/scheduler in our Melrose, MN office.

This is a full-time position with benefits. Prior alarm experience or technical experience is preferred. Please email resume with optional cover letter to adminsec@heartlandss.com. Heartland Security is an equal opportunity employer.

Responsibilities:

- Answer phones and resolve customer concerns
- Provide the highest quality of customer service via phone
- Work with other departments to schedule installation/service appointments with customers in a timely manner and maintain a logical flow of technician's route. Utilize Sedona software to select appropriate technician and get appropriate documentation to technician. Ensure proper parts and equipment are available for technicians.
- Review daily reports and notify customers of trouble conditions on alarm system
- Troubleshoot security system issues with customers on the phone
- Assist with inventory, closing and billing jobs and service tickets.
- Follow up on notifications from response center from after-hours technical support
- Assist with month-end reports
- Perform other office duties as assigned

Requirements:

- High school graduate or equivalent. College education preferred.
- Superior verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to maintain confidential information
- Excellent customer-service and problem-solving skills
- Ability to pass background check
- Above-average computer skills to include Excel and Access
- Ability to navigate software and/or take notes while speaking on the phone
- Ability to multi-task with attention to accuracy and detail

Opinion

Make the time to make a difference

Heidi L. Everett
Editor



A good friend once said my husband and I have unrealistic expectations of what can be accomplished in a lifetime. We took that as a compliment. The reality is, we rarely sit idle.

As an adult, I've always worked full-time outside the home while raising three kids and – up until recently – caring for a hobby farm. And, I've always volunteered in a variety of capacities in my kids' schools and extracurriculars, with professional organizations, on local boards, and as part of the democratic process. My earliest memories of volunteering are from teaching Sunday school and working in the hospital as a Candy Striper when I was in high school.

Volunteering is just something I make time for, regardless of how busy I've been. Am I tired? Sometimes. But this busyness energizes me. More importantly, being a volunteer is an unparalleled opportunity to meet new people, to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the world that surrounds us and to influence positive change.

While covering the most recent local elections, I was struck by the fact nobody put their name on the ballot for mayor of St. Stephen (and kudos to Lisa Marvin for stepping up and rallying as a write-in candidate!). In some local races, incumbents who have spent decades on local councils were re-elected. Both of these situations suggest we are short on new folks making the time to be involved.

Now, I'm not suggesting everyone should run for office, although I have and cherish that experience of knocking on doors and meeting thousands of people. Our schools, places of worship, communities and governments have many volunteer opportunities.

If you can't make a lot of time now, start small. When I was president of the PTA at Kennedy Community School, I was so grateful to the parents who volunteered to run Family BINGO Night. This happened once a year in February – usually what seemed like the coldest night of the year – and more than 300 students and their families would show up for a night of fun. We also had parents who volunteered two hours a year at our annual fundraiser. Were there parents who made more time? Absolutely. The point is, every volunteer made a difference.

If you are willing to make more time, identify and pursue what's out there.

Right now, for instance, Stearns County is looking for residents to serve on a Stearns County board, committee or task force and is recruiting for appointments to be filled in January 2021. Openings exist on the Great River Regional Library Board, Stearns County HRA, Extension Committee, Human Services Advisory Committee and others.

The Board of Commissioners will also appoint individuals to serve on the Board of Adjustment, Feedlot Review Committee, Planning Commission, Park Commission and the Community Corrections Advisory Board. You can view openings and apply online by Dec. 1 at the Stearns County website. I encourage you to check these out.

To be honest, if I didn't make time to be involved, I'd likely spend far too much time sitting on the couch, eating nachos and binge-watching Netflix in my jammies. (And honestly, I do that from time to time).

The busiest people I know are often the ones who make time to do more. What about you?

Make the time to make a difference.

Our view: Celebrate one another

The election is over. The yard signs and banners are down. The ideological angst should begin to dissipate.

It's time to stop seeing each other as Democrats or Republicans and calling each other liberal or conservative, as if these are inherently bad. It's time to re-'friend' or re-'follow' our family members, acquaintances and colleagues on social media and share the extraordinary moments of everyday life at a safe distance. Let's resume being neighborly.

For our part, we invite you to celebrate each other with a new online feature:

Up-to-So-Good Citizen Spotlight

Our inbox often gets emails from people who want to simply recognize somebody else for doing good. Recently, for example, we heard from Traci Schellinger of Sartell who wrote about Cheryl Braun, the receptionist at Welch Dental:

I genuinely get excited to call my dentist because I get to talk to Cheryl. Cheryl puts forth genuine concern in any issues a patient is having, apologizes for rescheduling needs out of her control and empathizes with people as she works through her job daily. She keeps track of me as an individual and inquires about how things are going, remembering details from previous visits. Cheryl goes above and

beyond to seek answers and provide patients with anything they need, exceeding all customer service that I've ever experienced. Quite honestly – when I call the dental office, I feel like I'm calling my mom. This is the level of investment Cheryl has in me having a good experience. She cares, she listens and she offers helpful advice. She seems to love her job and as a result – her patients feel that. Thank you, Cheryl. For someone who hates the dentist (no offense Dr. Welch), you really make those twice a year cleanings pleasant!!! Keep up the amazing work and thank you for making Sartell a great place to be!!

Our own Carolyn Bertsch, assignment editor from Sartell, shared this:

I'd like to recognize Amy Walker, of St. Joseph, who stopped to help at a car accident she witnessed in St. Cloud Nov. 21. That Saturday my 80-year-old father was taking my younger sister for a drive when his minivan was struck by another driver. The driver, from Anoka, had attempted a left turn but instead crashed directly into my Dad's driver-side door. The door was mangled requiring my Dad to climb through a passenger door to exit. Amy saw the accident and was quick to stop and lend a hand. My Dad does not carry a cell phone, but Amy offered to call the police using hers and wait

with him on a cold 34-degree day. "I didn't have anywhere I needed to be right away, and I had a feeling that it was important for me to stop. I am glad I could be there for support and help him feel a bit better after a stressful situation." Both drivers left the incident without major bodily harm, and although my Dad's spirits were cast down by the damage sustained to his beloved minivan, they were again raised up by the kindness of a stranger during unfortunate circumstances. Thank you, Amy!

Have you experienced someone doing a random act of kindness? Do you know someone who is a tireless volunteer? Is there an employee who is exceptionally helpful, courteous and exceeds expectations? We'd love to know about it and share it on our website and Facebook page.

In 200 words or less, let us know who this person is, if they live or work in Sartell, St. Joseph or St. Stephen, and why they should be recognized. Include a photo. (Get their permission, too. Some people aren't comfortable with the attention, and we want to respect that.)

As we close out 2020 – a year marked by pandemic and political unrest – let's be in a place of celebration and appreciation.

Send submissions to editor@thenewsleaders.com.

This weekend, shop small businesses

Connor Kockler
Guest Writer



This weekend, as we enjoy our Thanksgiving turkey and company in person or remotely, it's important we consider another part of our local "family" – small businesses. This year has been tough for us all, with COVID-19 affecting almost every part of our lives. Schools and businesses have been closed, and important life events have been put on hold or canceled all together. Through all of this, local small businesses have been put through the worst of these effects. They are our neighbors having to deal with keeping their families safe on one hand, and protecting their employees and the businesses they have worked so hard to build on the other. This Thanksgiving weekend, let's show our appreciation for them too by supporting them however we can.

Local small businesses are the lifeblood of our cities here in Central Minnesota as well as in the United States. According to the federal Small Business Administration, there were 30.7 million small businesses with under 500 employees in the United States in 2019. These businesses employ almost 60 million people, which represents 47 percent of the U.S. workforce. In Minnesota specifically there were 520,110 small businesses with under 500 employees, employing 1.3 million people, which is 47 percent of Minnesota's workforce. These statistics make clear just how much of an impact small businesses have. By this math, every other

worker you meet should work for a small business.

I call small businesses part of our local "family" because they really do so much for us. When you look around and see local sports teams, parks and community projects, small businesses step up to the plate, contributing money and time to support them. Spending local really does help support the entire local area, not just supporting local jobs but almost everything else in the area as well. It also builds local pride, seeing all of the amazing things that are made possible through the support of generous local businesses and their employees.

So what can we do to support small businesses? To start, we need to be intentional. With the latest regulations, supporting small businesses becomes harder because we can't just eat in person at the local restaurant. It's tempting to order online from large chains or online stores but if you do some quick research or phone calls, you can find local businesses that are moving their operations to take-out or even limited delivery. Once you know those options are there, it's easy to keep patronizing

like you usually would and spread the word to people you know. Small businesses are still open and getting creative in light of these troubled times. We just need to make the effort to reach out to them and help others to do so as well.

You can also support small businesses by buying gift cards and other products for the holidays. We all have our favorite local store or restaurant, so why not make it part of the holiday shopping list? This is especially easy because there is already a day on the calendar for doing so, Small Business Saturday, which is Nov. 28. It's a day every year to support and appreciate small businesses, which is even more important now.

So while we enjoy Thanksgiving, we should be sure to thank and support our local small businesses. After all, they do so much for us, and this is a critical time, especially with everything that they have been dealing with. Though it may be some extra effort to search online, make a phone call or walk into the store to figure out what they are doing differently because of Covid-19, this effort is worth it to support local business. Let's keep our local "family" strong, and make it through this crisis together.

Connor Kockler is a student at St. John's University. He enjoys writing, politics and news, among other interests.

Have an opinion? Share it: news@thenewsleaders.com

Public notice

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING SARTELL-ST. STEPHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO 748

OCT. 19, 2020

SARTELL MIDDLE SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The regular school board meeting of Independent School District 748 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Jeremy Snoberger. Members present: Snoberger; Jason Nies, vice chair; Amanda Byrd, clerk; Patrick Marushin, treasurer; Lesa Kramer, director; Pamela Raden, director; and Jeff Schwiebert, superintendent. Members absent: none.

A motion was made by Kramer and seconded by Marushin to APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Nies and seconded by Byrd to APPROVE CONSENT ITEMS A.4.a-A.4.d AS PRESENTED BELOW. All in favor. Motion carried.

A.4.a. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on Sept. 21, 2020

Minutes of the school board listening session held on Oct. 7, 2020

A.4.b Checks in the amount of \$3,748,908.19 as presented:

General Fund	2,790,403.35
Food Service Fund	124,094.01
Transportation Fund	164,376.01
Community Service Fund	42,006.03
Capital Expenditure Fund	217,857.77
Activity Accounts	3,176.98
Internal Service Fund	406,994.04

Check numbers 179455 - 179727

ACHs in the amount of \$4,141.85 as presented:

General Fund	3,570.37
Transportation Fund	90.00
Activity Fund	481.48

ACH numbers 202000021-202000030

Receipts in the amount of \$4,124,945.39 as presented:

General Fund	3,785,833.91
Food Service Fund	63,030.03
Transportation Fund	1,682.46
Community Service Fund	52,667.74
Capital Expenditure Fund	35,254.77
Building Fund	362.71
Debt Service Fund	159,153.09
Activity Accounts	19,385.00
Internal Service Fund	7,575.68

Receipts 47951 - 48067

Wire transfers in the amount of \$1,103,709.44 as presented:

General Fund	290,016.73
Food Service Fund	7,345.30
Transportation Fund	2.71
Community Service Fund	1,012.39
Capital Expenditure Fund	5,494.00
Building Fund	22,618.97
Activity Accounts	83.50
Internal Service Fund	777,135.84

Wire transfers 202000139-202000190

Building Fund Checks in the amount of \$217,927.21 as presented:

Building Fund	217,927.21
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Check numbers 601133 to 601156

A.4.c Accept the following donations:

Blackberry Ridge Golf Course, Sartell High School, four class periods on the range/practice green and one nine-hole round for approximately 30 students, donation for Sartell High School Team Games class; Stephanie Johnson, ISD #748, \$350 worth of masks, masks for students; United Way of Central Minnesota, ISD #748, \$500, purchase school supplies.

A.4.d Accept the resignation of Stacey Hiltner, RIS, para, 10/16/20; Wyatt Gwost, transportation, bus driver, 10/23/20; deceased; Rustie Froemming, SHS, teacher, 9/16/20.

Student Representative Report:

No report

Superintendent Report: Jeff Schwiebert, superintendent

Schwiebert reported the Sartell Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for a new award this year for the Sartell Education Professional of the Year to recognize a school district employee for their service. The St. Francis Independent School District 15 board chair has shared a draft letter to send to Gov. Tim Walz requesting more local control for future changes in learning models for each district. The board can review the letter to see if it is something our district would want to sign; Schwiebert sees no problems with the letter. Three scenarios for snow days were discussed; scenario one, all students in hybrid or in-person model would be a snow day for all; scenario two, all students in distance learning would be no snow day; scenario three, grades six through 12 in distance learning would be no snow day, grades preschool to fifth in hybrid or in-person would be snow day and the day would be made up at the end of the school year. Last, but not least, congratulations to Alice Colatrella who scored a perfect ACT score last spring.

District Finance Report: Director of Business Services Joe Prom provided an update on district finances.

COVID-19 Report: Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert and Director of Human Resources Krista Durrwachter provided an update on how the district is moving forward with COVID-19.

Certified Continuing Contract Staff Report: Director of Human Resources Krista Durrwachter reported on new continuing contract certified staff.

Enrollment Report: Superintendent Schwiebert reported on the current enrollment numbers for each school.

School Board Committee Report:

Director Lesa Kramer reported the next Substance Free Coalition meeting will be on Nov. 9 and will be virtual.

School Board Chair Report: School Board Chair Jeremy Snoberger reported some options to provide support for the teachers and express thanks to them for all they are experiencing during the pandemic.

A motion was made by Raden and seconded by Nies to APPROVE #1-28:

New Employees/Changes:

Julia Bjerke, OREL, parent educator, \$47.24/hour, MA30, Step I, 3 hours/week, 12 weeks, additional assignment, 9/28/2020; Danielle Borst, SMS, para, \$16.42/hour, RIV, S1, 7 hours/day, replacing Kristine Schroers, 9/28/2020; Hannah Carey, OREL, ECFE, \$30.25/hour, BA, Step C, 6 hours/week, 12 weeks, additional assignment, 9/28/2020; Hannah Carey, OREL, parent educator, \$30.25/hour, BA, Step C, 6 hours/week, 12 weeks, additional assignment, 9/28/2020; Stacy Clitty, SHS, receptionist, \$28.29, RV, S6, change in assignment, 9/28/2020; Amber Coons, OREL, custodian, \$21.02/hour, RIII, S4, 8 hours/day, replacing Julie Reder, 10/15/2020; Deborah Danell, District, special education clerk, \$18.77/hour, RII, Step 1, new position - temporary, 10/2/2020; Krista Durrwachter, District, COVID coordinator, .15 FTE, \$18,600, new position - temporary, 7/1/2020; Elizabeth Golden, RIS, food service worker, \$15.89, R1, Step 1, 3 hours/day, new position, 9/18/2020; Brenda Holter, SHS, assistant volleyball, \$4,669 (9.5 percent), BA, Step H (\$49,145), replacing Montana Peters, 9/28/2020; Sydnee Holth, SMS, PT cleaner, \$15.89/hour, RI, Step 1, 4 hours/day, 185 days/year, new position, 9/23/2020; Tiana Jestus, OREL, cafeteria worker, \$15.89/hour, RI, S1, 2.5 hours/day, new position, 9/30/2020; Abbey Kajer, OREL, ECFE, \$27.32/hour, BA, Step A, 9 hours/week, 12 weeks, additional assignment, 9/28/2020; Vicky Knickerbocker, PMPS, student supervisor, \$13.87/hour, RI, S1, 2 hours/day, new position, 10/6/2020; Priscilla Lessard, SMS, food service worker, \$16.89/hour, R1, S2, 2.5 hours/day, additional assignment - temporary, 9/22/2020; Lu McIlwain, SMS, receptionist, \$18.77/hour, RII, S1, 8 hours/day, change in assignment, 10/5/2020; Marcus Oistad, SHS, ninth-grade football, \$4,518 (10.5 percent), BA, Step B (\$43,024), replacing Jacob Sailor, 9/28/2020; Cody Olson, SMS, seventh/eighth-grade activities and athletics, \$945 (2.25 percent), BA, Step A (\$42,002), replacing Helen Wilfhert, 8/31/2020; Julia Olson, Title I, St. Francis Xavier, \$26.86/hour, BA, Step A (\$42,002), replacing Judith Loudon, 10/21/2020; Julie Reder, RIS, head custodian, \$20.95/hour, RVIII, S1, 8 hrs/day, replacing Mike Lashinski, 10/5/2020; Jake Sailor, SHS, strength and conditioning coordinator, \$7,770 (18.5 percent), BA, A (\$42,002), replacing Nick Peterson, 7/1/2020; Doreen Schmidt, SMS, administrative assistant, \$23.26/

hour, RVI, S2, 8 hours/day, 222 days/year, change in assignment, 10/5/2020; Hally Schmit, RIS, para, \$16.42/hour, RIV, S1, 7 hours/day, replacing Kari Tuomi, 10/1/2020; Kelli Schrammel, SMS, food service worker, \$19.09/hour, RI, S5, 2.5 hours/day, additional assignment - temporary, 9/22/2020; Elena Stevens, SMS, para, \$16.42/hour, RIV, S1, 7 hours/day, replacing Julie Schnettler, 9/28/2020; Sue Symanietz, OREL, parent educator, \$27.32/hour, BA, A (\$42,002), 4 hours/week, 12 weeks, additional assignment, 9/28/2020; Sarah Zehowski, PMPS, cafeteria worker, \$15.89/hour, RI, S1, new position, 10/5/2020.

Leaves of Absence:

Dorothy Ferguson, Transportation, van driver, LOA, 9/21/20-10/29/20.

All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Marushin and seconded by Byrd TO APPROVE ADOPTION OF POLICY AND PROCEDURE 630 VIDEO MEDIA USE. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Marushin and seconded by Nies TO APPROVE CLERICAL CONTRACT AS PRESENTED. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Kramer and seconded by Nies TO APPROVE SUBSTITUTE STAFF RATE INCREASES AS PRESENTED. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Nies and seconded by Raden TO APPROVE KATE ELLIS, COURTNEY SNOBERGER AND SOPHIA SPECKHARD AS THE STUDENT SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR. All in favor. Motion carried.

Schedule Work Session and Committee Meetings:

Future Board Special Meeting Election Canvass Meeting - Thursday, Nov. 12 - District Service Center Boardroom @ 7 a.m.

Future Board Meeting - Monday, Nov. 16 - Sartell Middle School Performing Arts Center @ 6:30 p.m.

Committee Assignments were reviewed.

A motion to ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:08 p.m. was made by Nies and seconded by Marushin. All in favor. Motion carried.

/s/ Amanda Byrd, clerk

Publish: Nov. 27, 2020

FINANCE GUIDE | STATISTICS

American Finances: By the Numbers

According to a 2018 Financial Capability Study from FINRA Investor Education Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to financial education and empowerment, only 31% of Americans are very satisfied with their money situations.

Here are some additional statistics from the FINRA study to help shed light on the average American family and their earning and spending habits.

- One in 5 Americans experienced an income drop in the last year, and half can comfortably meet their monthly obligations.

- Asked if they could come up with \$2,000 in emergency savings in a month, 43% of Americans were certain they could, while another 22% said they probably could.

- Only 58% of Americans have a retirement account; half worry they may run out of money

while retired.

- Even though Americans can make ends meet, the percentage spending less than their income has stayed nearly unchanged over the decade. Almost half haven't set aside money to cover expenses for three months.

- 37% of Americans surveyed say they have too much debt.

Here are a few more statistics from various sources underscoring the need for stronger personal finance education for American citizens.

- Twenty percent of Americans don't save any of their annual income at all (CNBC), with the average American saving less

than 5% of his or her disposable income (Los Angeles Times).

- More than 40% of Americans have less than \$10,000 saved for when they retire (GoBanking Rates).

- 56% of millennials don't have any money saved in a retirement account (PurePoint Financial).

- Only 24% of millennials demonstrate basic financial literacy, according to a study from the National Endowment for Financial Education.

- A recent report found that half of American households live paycheck to paycheck (MarketWatch).

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