

# Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, Nov. 12, 2021  
Volume 26, Issue 23  
Est. 1995

## Town Crier

### Turkey in a Bag seeks donations

Thanksgiving in a Box/Turkey in a Bag, sponsored by a group of Sartell High School students, is collecting monetary donations from Nov. 15-19. The group will fill boxes of food to distribute to families in need. While the school has an in-person option, donors may also donate virtually by visiting <https://sartell.revtrak.net/Donations/#/v/thanksgiving-in-a-bag-donation>.

### “We Are Thankful” to be held Nov. 14

United Way of Central Minnesota and Kids Fighting Hunger are excited to announce our ninth annual “We Are Thankful” community-wide food-packaging event on Sunday, Nov. 14, at the River’s Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud. This event will give families, adults and children in our communities a chance to help provide needed food to families in Central Minnesota and in countries that are experiencing food insecurities. Three shifts available to volunteer 9-11 a.m., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 1-3 p.m. Donations needed to pay for ingredients. Recommended donation is \$20/per adult, \$15/per student, \$10/per child. Masks required. Visit [www.unitedwayhelps.org](http://www.unitedwayhelps.org) to register. Contact Mary Krippner, United Way director of volunteer engagement, at (320) 223-7991 or [mkrippner@unitedwayhelps.org](mailto:mkrippner@unitedwayhelps.org).

### Winter gear for kids

Collect winter gear to help kids stay warm this cold winter season. All gently used and new winter clothing of all sizes accepted. Items include hats, waterproof gloves, snow pants, coats/jackets, boots and warm socks. Contact Mary Krippner at (320) 223-7991 or [mkrippner@unitedwayhelps.org](mailto:mkrippner@unitedwayhelps.org).

**INSERTS:**  
**Drakes**  
**Country Manor**  
**Senior Housing**

## Middle school students build a lasting contribution



photo by Mike Knaak

Sartell Middle School eighth-graders (from left) Kiersten Meester, Corbin Johnson, Justin Hunt and Jaelyn Paulson lift a bench and position it in holes.

by Mike Knaak  
[news@thenewsleaders.com](mailto:news@thenewsleaders.com)

When seventh- and eighth-graders in Sartell Middle School’s What I Need classes head off to high school, they’ll leave behind a lasting contribution to their school.

This fall the classes built and installed 23 benches at two outdoor learning spaces overlooking a pond west of the school.

“We are lucky to have a beautiful forest,” said teacher Luke Miller about the forest and wetlands between Riverview Intermediate School, the middle school and Pine Meadow Primary School.

On a recent fall afternoon, students gathered shovels, power screw drivers and levels. They split into teams of four or five students and worked on a sloped clearing near the pond to place and level the benches and pour fast-setting concrete into pre-dug

**Students • page 8**

## Fewer Covid cases, shots could lead to changes in schools

by Mike Knaak  
[news@thenewsleaders.com](mailto:news@thenewsleaders.com)

With fewer Covid-19 cases and more vaccinations, Sartell-St. Stephen school district leaders are anticipating changes to the Safe Learning Plan.

Since the beginning of the

school year, the percent of positive cases among all students has dropped from 1.27 percent to 0.71 percent. Percent of positive staff has dropped by more than half, from 2.08 percent to 0.75 percent as of last week.

School leaders attribute those improving numbers to the dis-

trict’s mask requirement and more student vaccinations. As of Nov. 8, the vaccine is available to children ages 5-11.

“If things keep going the way there’re going, we anticipate making changes to the Safe Learning Plan,” said Superintendent Jeff Ridlehoover at

the school board’s Nov. 8 work session.

In addition to the mask requirement, the Safe Learning Plan sets out guidelines for quarantine and how to handle positive cases and exposures.

Ridlehoover said compared

**Shots • page 3**

## Broadband extension thrills Brockway Township residents

by Dennis Dalman  
[news@thenewsleaders.com](mailto:news@thenewsleaders.com)

Doug Vagle and his family, who live in Brockway Township near St. Stephen, feel happily reconnected again.

Doug is the lead pastor of The Waters Church in Sartell.

They now have access to state-of-the-art broadband service, along with many other families who feel suddenly updated.

Doug and Peggy and their three children (Abby, Nat, Sophia) lived for 13 years in “The Wilds” neighborhood of Sartell, but in August of last year, they moved into a house on Pine Point Road in Brockway Township.

It was like taking a huge step backward – especially for school work, Doug said, because in Sartell they had begun to take for granted broadband access. In Brockway Township, they quickly learned what they were missing.

Like many rural or remote areas of the country, the township was lacking in high-speed broadband service. The Vagles, for example, went from more than 200 megabytes in Sartell to only 10 or so in the township.

That all changed recently when Spectrum Internet installed an advanced broadband network to more than 70 homes along Pine Point Road just east of St. Stephen.

“It’s awesome, and we’re so thankful it (the broadband network) has got us up into the current digital age so we can be more effective and at a higher speed,” Doug said, adding it is so much easier to be connected with anything and everything and everybody.

In an interview with the Newsleader, Kimberly Noetzel, explained how the service was extended. Noetzel is the senior manager of communication for

**Broadband • page 2**



photo by Carolyn Bertsch

**Firefighter ladybug at Monster Dash**  
Rozlynae Dawson, 5, of St. Cloud, tries on her new firefighter hat Oct. 30 at the Monster Dash event in Sartell. Additional photo on page 3.



## 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 [tricity-crimestoppers.org](http://tricity-crimestoppers.org). Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for a crime.

### Oct. 26

11:14 p.m. Suspicious vehicle. Riverside Avenue N. While an officer was on routine patrol, they noticed a vehicle pull into the park after hours. The officer stopped and made contact with the driv-

er. The driver was identified and told the officer they were playing Pokémon. Driver was advised of park hours and the driver left the area.

### Oct. 27

10:50 p.m. Traffic stop. Pinecone Road N. While on routine patrol, an officer witnessed a vehicle driving over the speed limit. The officer made contact with the driver; the driver was under 18 years of age. The driver stated he was in a hurry to get home and didn't notice his speed. The officer contacted the driver's parents, and a verbal warning for speed was given.

### Oct. 28

6:26 p.m. Gunshots. Third Avenue N. While an officer was at the fuel pumps, they were approached by a male who stated he had heard three gunshots. The male was unsure which direction the shots were coming from but stated it was only a few minutes ago. The officer checked the area and did not locate any issues. The officer spoke to several other people who were outside, and they did not report anything out of the ordinary.

### Oct. 29

7:27 p.m. Suspicious activity. First Street NE. An officer was dispatched to a business that received a threatening phone call. The employee was shaken up by the message, so employee's boyfriend called the number back and a younger female answered the phone, stating it was the wrong number. The officer spoke to both parties at the business and then called the number back. The officer spoke to a parent who stated he was aware of the phone call to his daughter. The parent asked his son if he had made any prank phone calls; the son denied. The officer spoke to the parent and the parent stated it could have been his son and he would deal with it on his end.

### Oct. 30

1:21 p.m. Warrant. Troop Drive. Stearns County dispatch received a message from Wright County Sheriff's Department requesting Sartell Police Department to check an address for an individual with

a felony Wright County warrant. Two Sartell officers and a Stearns County deputy made their way to the address. The individual is known to try and flee in the past so one officer stayed outside. The Sartell officer entered the home and made contact with the individual with the warrant. The officer told the individual he was under arrest and the individual started to yell and resist. The individual was taken into custody without injury and transported to the Stearns County Jail.

### Oct. 31

2:31 a.m. 911 hang-up. Knottingham Drive. A Sartell officer was dispatched to a 911 hang-up. Dispatch could hear breathing but received no response when calling back three different times. Dispatch could not locate a name to the phone number. The officer arrived at the nearest mapped location; it was a vacant lot. The officer checked the area with Nopic, and nothing was located. The officer again tried calling the number back but got no answer. Officer was unable to locate anything.

### Nov. 1

2:56 p.m. Crash. Hwy 15/CR 120. An officer was dispatched to a vehicle vs deer crash. The officer arrived and noted heavy front-end damage to the vehicle, and asked dispatch to get a tow enroute. The driver was unharmed but shaken up. State patrol did not respond so the Sartell officer handled the crash and took photos.

# Broadband

## from front page

Spectrum Internet/Charter Communications, the Waite Park office.

The expansion project cost about \$200,000 with \$67,000 contributed from residents in that area of Brockway Township. Spectrum (a brand name for Charter) spent \$125,000.

In early October, the wiring and connections were completed, and Spectrum Internet and a wide array of digital options became available to the township residents along Pine Point Road.

There are no modem fees, data caps or contracts for the service, which features download speeds of from 200 to 600 Mbps for residents and businesses.

Among the options made possible by Spectrum are 200 high-definition TV channels, an interactive network offering access to 85,000 movies and shows and a plethora of streaming options on many platform apps.

There is also a home-phone service available via Spectrum and even more options. To learn more about them, go to [www.spectrum.com](http://www.spectrum.com) and also check out corporate. [charter.com](http://charter.com)

"We are continually extending our services as much as possible," Noetzel said. "We (Charter Communications) now serves 160 communities throughout Minnesota."

Charter now has 31 million customers in 41 states.

## Earn Extra Income

### Volunteer in your community as a paid volunteer!

Lutheran Social Service of MN is seeking volunteers to provide companionships to older adults or work with school age children as a mentor. Volunteers of the program qualify for small hourly tax-free stipends and transportation reimbursement.

Please contact Janel at 320.241.5173 or

[Janel.Heinen@lssmn.org](mailto:Janel.Heinen@lssmn.org) for more information and to make an impact in your community!!



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Seniors**



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of Minnesota

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Waite Park, MN

[trautcompanies.com](http://trautcompanies.com)

by Dennis Dalman

[news@thenewsleaders.com](mailto:news@thenewsleaders.com)

Although it's not winter – not quite yet anyway – winter parking restrictions have already gone into effect for all Sartell streets and alleys.

The restrictions began Nov. 1 and will last until April 1.

A city ordinance prohibits parking on any city street, alley or thoroughfare between the hours of 1-7 a.m.

The prohibition will remain in effect for five months whether or not snow is on the ground at any particular time. Any vehicles parked in violation of the ordinance may be ticketed

and towed, with the vehicles' owners responsible for any expenses.

The fine for violating the ordinance is \$25, with an additional \$5 if the fine is not paid within seven days.

Police-department officials are requesting homeowners and renters in the city inform their guests and visiting family members of the winter-parking rules.

An ambitious effort has been made to remind motorists of the ordinance with postings on the city's electronic bulletin boards, the city's website, welcome packets for new residents, inserts with utility bills and signs at the entrance roads to the city.

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The Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleaders is the legal newspaper for the Sartell-St. Stephen school district and city of St. Stephen

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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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Sartell-St. Stephen • St. Joseph

Reaching Everybody!  
**Newsleaders**

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Coborn's - Riverside  
Country Manor  
Country Store & Pharmacy  
Holiday on 7th  
Holiday - Riverside  
House of Pizza  
Kwik Trip

Little Dukes - Pinecone  
Quik Stop - Cenex  
Sartell City Hall  
Sartell Community Center  
School District Offices  
Walgreens  
The Newsleaders office

[www.thenewsleaders.com](http://www.thenewsleaders.com)



# Shots

## from front page

with neighboring districts without mask requirements, Sartell-St. Stephen’s cases are about 50 percent lower.

“Masking has been a mitigation factor for us,” he said. “We haven’t had to have kids out of school.”

Krista Durrwachter, the district’s Human Resources director, told the board the district’s Covid committee, which includes community members and medical professionals, will review the situation and report back to the board.

Board members debated how soon they will want to make a decision and when, if changes are made, to implement them. The board decided to discuss the situation at its Dec. 1 work session and possibly announce a decision. Changes could come when students return after break on Jan. 3 or three weeks later at the start of the third quarter.

Board members debated the need to give parents as much notice as possible of any changes while also collecting the most recent data, including possible outbreaks during the holidays.

## Making connections

Principals of the districts PreK-5 schools outlined an expanded back-to-school program to strengthen partnerships between parents and teachers. Instead of the traditional open house, the principals recommended more time to get to know teachers, explore learning spaces, learn classroom routines and learn about school services such as technology, food, transportation and special education.

The plan also speeds up the timeline so teachers will have testing and assessment data on each student available at the beginning of the school year.

Shots • page 5



TURKEY BINGO

Sunday, Nov. 14

noon - 3 p.m.

VFW 428

9-18th Ave. N., St. Cloud

Sponsored by VFW 428 Auxiliary

All proceeds go to local Veterans





photo by Carolyn Bertsch

**Twinning at Monster Dash**  
Twins, Rose (left) and Lily Sherry, 7, of Sartell, spread their wings Oct. 30 during Monster Dash at the Sartell Community Center.

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# Homeless people not hopeless but seek help

by Dennis Dalman  
news@thenewsleaders.com

There are more than 100 homeless people living in or next to Sartell, according to Harry Fleegel, executive director of the St. Cloud-based “Homeless Helping Homeless,” a non-profit organization.

Based on Fleegel’s research and many personal connections, there are at any given time about five to 10 people living outside in tents, even in the coldest weather, in or near Sartell. Many others sleep in the homes (often on couches) of relatives, friends or acquaintances. During the day, those people tend to wander, seeking help in various places, Fleegel said.

In the greater St. Cloud area, including Sartell, there are more than 1,000 homeless people in

all categories of homelessness, according to Fleegel. He enumerated those categories: those who stay in tents (about 30 to 50 people) even in brutal winter cold with the help of fishhouse-type heaters; those who sleep in vehicles; those who sleep under bridges, in stair wells, abandoned buildings and even outhouses; and those who stay temporarily in the houses or apartments of relatives, friends or acquaintances. Those who are homeless include lone individuals, married couples, unmarried couples and children. Fortunately, children and their families receive top priority with help agencies for indoor warm shelters – churches, temporary apartments and so forth. But warm or not, they are “homeless,” in a limbo of temporary status.

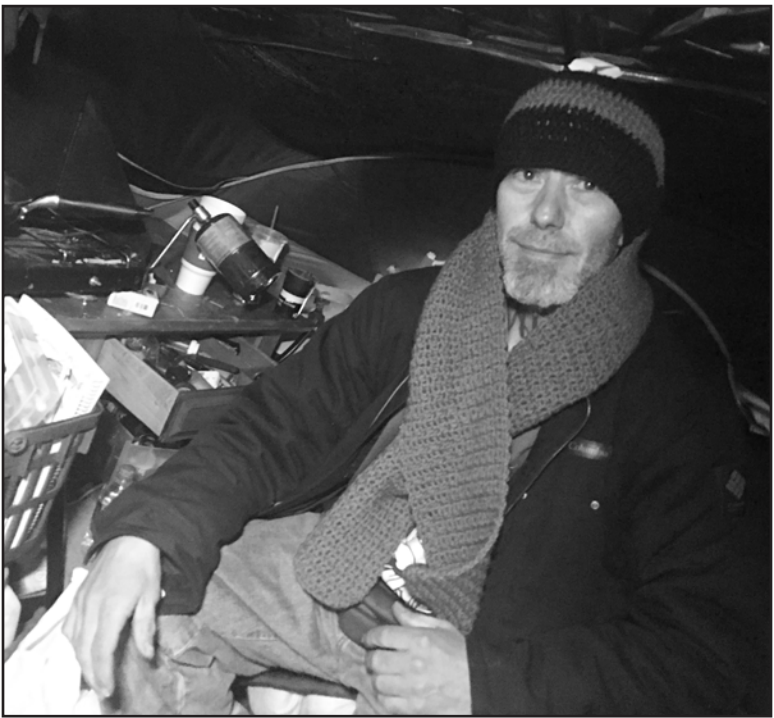
**Eyes opened wide**

Fleegel, 72, was born and raised in St. Cloud but worked for 30 years in the Twin Cities where he was a small-business consultant for immigrant communities in Plymouth. He has a master’s degree in business administration. His wife, Mary, with a master’s degree in autism, was a special-education teacher for the Anoka-Hennepin County School District.

When they both retired, they became a bit restless and decided three years ago to move to St. Cloud where they have many relatives, including Harry’s sister, Mary Fasen of Sartell.

In St. Cloud, they were eager to volunteer to help the less fortunate, and their eyes soon opened wide to some heartbreaking realities. A year ago, after they began

**Homeless • page 11**



contributed photo

**A homeless man inside his makeshift shelter sports a new hat and scarf made and donated by the “Yarn Ladies” of Sartell.**



contributed photo

**New Towne Hair is located in Pinecone Marketplace just south of the Coborn’s Super Store along Pinecone Road in Sartell.**

## New Towne Hair opens in Sartell

by Dennis Dalman  
news@thenewsleaders.com

A new hair salon called New Towne Hair has just opened in the mall near the Coborn’s Super Store in south Sartell.

The address of the new business is 1733 Pinecone Rd. S.

The salon, a family-owned business, is located in the same building as two former hair-related shops: Michelle Kenric Hair Studio & Spa and Daylily Spa Salon.

The owner of New Towne Hair is April Zimmer, who lives in Foley with her husband, Charlie, and their four children ages 12-17. Charlie teaches sev-

enth and eighth grades at Beck-er Middle School.

April Zimmer said that when they chose a name (New Towne Hair), they decided to add the “e” to Town in honor of Charlie’s mother, whose maiden name was Towne.

The shop offers a full range of hair services and waxing.

“We do some good hair,” Zimmer said. “A lot of our guests praise us for how well we cut curly hair. Cuts and coloring are the majority of what we do.”

New Towne Hair welcomes both women and men, girls and boys.

So far, there are three hair-

dressers – Jessica Traut, Breanna Hacklander and Zimmer herself. Beth Chandler is shop manager. Zimmer said she will definitely hire more hairdressers in the near future.

Customers can make appointments, but walk-ins are also welcome. To make an appointment, call 320-640-3033.

“Our number-one concern,” Zimmer said, “is to make sure our guests have the greatest experience here, that we listen closely to what they want so we can please them and make them very happy. We want them to feel as comfortable here as if they were at home.”

**Hair • page 8**

## 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.*

**Friday, Nov. 12**

**“Church Basement Ladies”** dinner theater, performed by Great Northern Theatre Company, 6:30 p.m., The Great Blue Heron, 305 Fifth Ave. S., Cold Spring. Tickets available at [www.gntc1.com](http://www.gntc1.com) or call 320-241-GNTC.

**Saturday, Nov. 13**

**“Church Basement Ladies”** dinner theater, performed by Great Northern Theatre Company, 6:30 p.m., The Great Blue Heron, 305 Fifth Ave. S., Cold Spring. Tickets available at [www.gntc1.com](http://www.gntc1.com) or call 320-241-GNTC.

**Sunday, Nov. 14**

**Turkey bingo**, sponsored by VFW 428, noon-3 p.m., 9 18th Ave. N., St. Cloud.

**Friendsgiving Food Truck Festival**, noon-5 p.m., Milk & Honey Ciders, 11738 CR 51, St. Joseph. [www.adfedcentral.com/events/friendsgiving-food-truck-fest/](http://www.adfedcentral.com/events/friendsgiving-food-truck-fest/)

**“Church Basement Ladies”** dinner theater, performed by Great Northern Theatre Company, 1 p.m., The Great Blue Heron, 305 Fifth Ave. S., Cold Spring. Tickets available at [www.gntc1.com](http://www.gntc1.com) or call 320-241-GNTC.

**Monday, Nov. 15**

**Thanksgiving in a Bag** donation, today-Nov. 19, Sartell High School, 748 Seventh St. N, Sartell. Monetary donations accepted online. <https://sartell.revtrak.net/Donations/#/v/thanksgiving-in-a-bag-donation>.

**Fare for All**, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church, 610 C.R. 2, St. Joseph.

**Sartell-St. Stephen School Board**, 6:30 p.m., District Service Center, 212 Third Ave. N. Sartell.

**Tuesday, Nov. 16**

**Thanksgiving in a Bag** donation, today-Nov. 19, Sartell High School, 748 Seventh St. N, Sartell. Monetary donations accepted online. <https://sartell.revtrak.net/Donations/#/v/thanksgiving-in-a-bag-donation>.

**Zonta Christmas House Shop Hop**, today-Nov. 21. Come tour fabulous holiday displays at 18 different decorators and stores throughout the St. Cloud area. [zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house](http://zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house).

**“How to Reopen and Work a Genealogical Cold Case,”** presented by St. Cloud Area Genealogists, 7 p.m., Stearns History Museum,

235 33rd Ave. S., St. Cloud. [www.stearnshistorymuseum.org/scag/](http://www.stearnshistorymuseum.org/scag/). Meeting by Zoom. Brendon Duffy, 320-237-3723.

**Wednesday, Nov. 17**

**Zonta Christmas House Shop Hop**, today-Nov. 21. Come tour fabulous holiday displays at 18 different decorators and stores throughout the St. Cloud area. [zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house](http://zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house).

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**Thursday, Nov. 18**

**Zonta Christmas House Shop Hop**, today-Nov. 21. Come tour fabulous holiday displays at 18 different decorators and stores throughout the St. Cloud area. [zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house](http://zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house).

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**Coffee and Conversation**, a senior discussion group, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Featuring Tony Krueger, City of Sartell Parks Supervisor.

**Sartell American Legion**, open to all veterans young and old, 6

p.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S., Sartell.

**Minnesota Voices Book Club: Ames Sheldon’s “Lemons in the Garden of Love,”** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Zoom sessions led by Minnesota authors. Caitlin at [ccarson@stearns-museum.org](mailto:ccarson@stearns-museum.org). 320-253-8424.

**Friday, Nov. 19**

**Zonta Christmas House Shop Hop**, today-Nov. 21. Come tour fabulous holiday displays at 18 different decorators and stores throughout the St. Cloud area. [zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house](http://zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house).

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**Saturday, Nov. 20**

**Zonta Christmas House Shop Hop**, today-Nov. 21. Come tour fabulous holiday displays at 18 different decorators and stores throughout the St. Cloud area. [zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house](http://zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house).

**Food Drive Drop-Off**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran

Church, 610 C.R. 2, St. Joseph.

**Community Meal**, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., drive by and pick-up style, First United Methodist Church, 1107 Pinecone Road S., Sartell.

**“Church Basement Ladies”** dinner theater, performed by Great Northern Theatre Company, 6:30 p.m., The Great Blue Heron, 305 Fifth Ave. S., Cold Spring. Tickets available at [www.gntc1.com](http://www.gntc1.com) or call 320-241-GNTC.

**Sartell Winter Market**, 1:30-4:30 p.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Shop local! This indoor market features homemade food items, crafts, jewelry and more.

**Sunday, Nov. 21**

**Zonta Christmas House Shop Hop**, today-Nov. 21. Come tour fabulous holiday displays at 18 different decorators and stores throughout the St. Cloud area. [zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house](http://zontast-cloudmn.org/christmas-house).

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**Monday, Nov. 22**

**Sartell City Council**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 125 Pinecone Road N.

# Shots

from page 3

Each family will be asked to schedule a 40-minute meeting with the student’s teacher during the first two days of school.

“The typical open house is a little rushed,” Oak Ridge Early Learning Center Principal Jason Mielke said. “This will give parents a chance to get their questions answered.”

**GOT A COMMENT?**  
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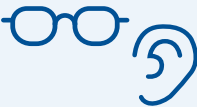



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SHOP LOCAL | FOLLOW THE MONEY

# Where your Taxes Go

When you make a purchase at a store, do you ever stop to think about where your money goes?

When you look at the receipt, are you ever curious to find out where and how your tax dollars are spent, or do you chalk it up to the government using your funds on agendas you have no control over?

While it's easy to become frustrated when seeing a portion of your money go into taxes, shopping locally ensures that your contribution stays in the community. That's why it's so important to show your support to local business by being a consistent customer for them.

Rather than buying online and having items delivered, get some fresh air by personally visiting the store and making your money work toward your neighborhood's growth. Check out how your area's tax flow is positively enhanced simply by buying from locally owned businesses.



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## BUILD LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In most cases, areas that charge sales taxes divide the earnings between the state and local communities. Regions that are positively impacted include counties, cities and special districts. According to the Tax County Policy, sales taxes account for about 10% of all gained revenue.

Most of the expendable income is used toward improving roadways by repairing potholes or other defects. Citizens also gain safety and recreational benefits due to the development of bicycle paths and public park maintenance.

## BENEFIT INSTITUTIONS

Many of your local institu-

tions rely on your dollars being spent in the area. Collected taxes are often used to fund state education for grades K-12 and higher education. The revenue collects supplies for classes, making building upgrades and training programs to increase teacher awareness.

Some emergency services also benefit from local sales tax

collections like police and fire departments. They receive funding to purchase new safety equipment, K-9 units and updated vehicles.

## HELP A NEIGHBOR

One of the most significant contributions from collecting sales taxes is programs that benefit community members

who struggle financially. With the support of the federal government, states often fund health insurance for families. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, tax-driven programs aid about 74 million low-income children, parents, older adults and those with disabilities every month.

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# By The Numbers

Small businesses offer service that is unparalleled by larger big box stores. There’s also an economic benefit to shopping local, especially when you look at the big picture.

Here are some numbers about shopping local this year from Fundera.

Small businesses generate \$68 of local economic return for every \$100 spent. Meanwhile, spending the same \$100 at a national chain only nets \$43.

More than \$9.3 billion would be directly returned to the U.S. economy if every family spent \$10 a month at a local business.

Businesses with fewer than 500 employees account for 99.7% of all U.S. employers.

Small businesses donate 250% more than large businesses to community causes. More than half of polled small businesses plan on donating to charity. When you shop local, you’re putting money back into your community through charitable causes, too.

Small businesses employ 58.9 million people.

Local business generates 70% more local economic activity per square foot than big-box retailers.

More than a quarter of small



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business owners are immigrants.

Around half – 48% – of the overall growth of U.S. business ownership can be attributed to immigrant business owners.

About a quarter of local businesses close because of

low sales or limited cash flow.

The majority, around 65%, of Americans’ shopping budgets are spent in store.

73% of searchers trust a local business more because of positive reviews.

65 million local businesses

have a Facebook page, but only 4 million are using Facebook advertising.

61% of shoppers say they shop locally because of a unique product selection.

56% of workers at locally owned businesses have high

commitment scores.

Minnesota is ranked the best large state for local businesses.

South Dakota is the best small state for local businesses.

Pittsburgh is the best metropolitan area for local businesses.



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photo by Mike Knaak  
**Sartell Middle School eighth-grader Jaelyn Paulson drills a hole while Justin Hunt steadies a bench leg.**



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# Students

from front page

holes.

The quick teamwork was made possible because Miller said the class “pre-gamed” in the classroom what they would do in the 30 minutes available to work outside.

“We discussed elevation and slope, taught how to level,” Miller said.

While Miller called out how much time the class had left to work, the students hustled through the project.

Earlier this fall, students picked the location and undergrowth was cleared. Riverview teacher Christopher Magnuson designed the benches for the students to build.

Miller said there are several lessons for his students. The project “builds school pride and culture, and invests in some things students will use.” The practical lessons include real-world skills students can use in the future and how to work together to achieve a goal.

All the middle school students will benefit by moving classes outdoors or maybe read a book or do homework in a beautiful location.

There are more plans for the outdoor classrooms. Miller is applying for grants to add a dock that will be useful for science experiments and for kayaks. In the spring, plans call for a third location to be completed. The future could bring more environmental enhancements such as wood duck houses and nesting pads.

“We are very lucky to have that space,” Miller said.



contributed photo  
**April Zimmer of Foley, owner of New Towne Hair**

# Hair

from page 4

Born in St. Cloud, Zimmer grew up in Foley and earned a cosmetology degree from the Regency Beauty Institute in downtown St. Cloud. She has been a hairdresser for 20 years.

Zimmer said she is proud to open her shop after the virus pandemic was so hard on so many people and businesses during the past two years.

“This is a great time to show people there is hope and progress,” she said.



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# Opinion

## Our View

### Good deeds don't go unnoticed

Volunteering around the holidays has become a tradition for some. Whether it's ringing the Salvation Army bell outside your local grocery store, donating gifts to Toys for Tots or offering to serve food at the shelter, families come together around the holidays to do their part for those in need. It's amazing to see what us humans can accomplish when we put our neighbors first.

These volunteering opportunities are of course important but we need to remember people in need are not in need only around the holidays. It's understandable as a society we generally start to feel more generous around the holidays, but a homeless person or a struggling family doesn't suddenly need help because the calendar flipped to November. It isn't difficult to find opportunities all year-round for places that need help supporting those in need. Just call your local Salvation Army any time and they can point you in the right direction.

There are lessons for the next generation here too. If you take your kids with you when you volunteer to show them the true meaning of helping those in need, don't display it for the world to see. Taking pictures with your family to commemorate the time you all worked together as a family is completely fine. But if you have to post your generosity on social media, one must ask, who are really doing it for? And furthermore, what are your kids being taught when they watch mom or dad snap pictures of the day only to post them on social media with the caption, "taught my kids what the holidays are all about today?" Perhaps use that platform to remind others there are volunteering opportunities out there, maybe post a couple links to help people find them. All this can be done without posting your own pat on the back.

If you have the urge to help those who need it around the holidays, then by all means, that's exactly what you should do. And of course, your children should be a part of it too. But think twice before posting your good deeds all over social media, and please keep in mind, a person in need, isn't just in need two months of the year. The same organizations you go through around the holidays also have programs and volunteer opportunities year-round.

Giving what you can when you can is a beautiful thing. Whether it's around the holidays, all year-round or whenever you happen to cross the path of someone in need. Just remember there are real, living human beings on the other side of that generosity who deserve not just our help but our respect and discretion as well. And remember, a good deed never really goes unnoticed. There will always be someone who appreciates what you do, and theirs is the only appreciation that should matter.

### Letters policy

Letters to the editor may be sent to news@thenewsleaders.com or mailed to 1622 11th Ave. S.E., St. Cloud, MN 56304. Deadline is noon Monday. Please include your full name for publication (and address and phone number for verification only.) Letters must be 350 words or less. We reserve the right to edit for space or to not publish.

## When thank you doesn't cover it

Yesterday was Veterans' Day. It's a day to remember what the men and women in service have done for our country and to show our appreciation.

One of the most important people in my life is a veteran, my father. He fought in the Vietnam war. Throughout the years, I have tried to find ways to show my appreciation for what he went through and did for our country without actually saying thank you. You see, my father does not want to be thanked. Truth be told, I understand why. I don't think when it comes to Vietnam vets that this is all that unusual. And yet every year, I try to find subtle ways I can show him how proud I am of him and how much I appreciate what he has done.

We can learn a lot from our veterans. They follow a moral code most of us have somehow forgotten throughout the years. They live their lives in service to others and that does not stop when they go home to their families or after they are discharged. They may truly be some of the only human beings on earth who fully understand what it means to sacrifice. And that's not just a sacrifice for those they

Leanne  
Loy  
*Editor*



know and care about, they do this for complete strangers.

They are courageous. They face the unknown with strength and bravery. This doesn't mean they don't get scared, it would be completely ignorant to think that. It means they face fear and the unknown despite being afraid. Most of us wouldn't be able to endure what our veterans have endured.

So why are we not treating them better? They put their lives on the line, face horrible conditions, witness unspeakable things and live the rest of their lives battling a new kind of war, one no one trains them on how to maneuver, one only they can see. When a veteran leaves a war, the war does not leave the veteran. I can't help but wonder how we can sit back and worship actors and athletes, paying them millions to simply entertain us, and yet our vets come home and must continue to work hard jobs (if they can even

## 'Wild & Free' saves injured, orphaned critters

Dennis  
Dalman  
*Reporter*



called and were told not only would the center accept the fawns but that someone would drive toward Alexandria to meet them halfway to transfer the fawns to the safety of the center. Each year, Wild & Free cares for more than 20 fawns, not to mention more than 600 animals that were found injured, abused, orphaned or lost.

The city of Garrison is located on the northwest edge of Mille Lacs Lake.

Wild & Free's mission is "to relieve the unnecessary suffering, provide humane treatment and, if possible, ensure every animal has the chance to return back to freedom in the wild." It's a mission all human beings should strive for, but sad to say, too many do not.

Among the critters helped at the center (feeding, medicines, surgeries if necessary, rehabilitation) are black bears, foxes, eagles, hummingbirds, raccoons, rabbits, owls, ducks, turtles, bobcats, beavers, flying squirrels – a virtual menagerie of wonderful creatures in need who are brought to the center from throughout Minnesota.

In 1985, a Twin Cities veterinary doctor, Debbie Skedahl, relocated to Garrison and opened its animal

find one) after putting their lives in danger for our safety. Why is it so easy for us to forget what they did for us?

Being raised by a Vietnam vet has not always been easy. But I'm proud of my dad. He may not want to be thanked for his service, but that doesn't mean I can't still thank him for other things. Like teaching me how to be thick-skinned on the outside, but hold a tender, kind heart on the inside. Or showing me how to drive a four-wheeler, a tractor, and later in life, a car. Or the fact he has instilled me that our purpose here is to take care of other people. He's shown me how to sacrifice for those we love simply because we love them and asking nothing in return. He did all this with a demon on his back, dark memories in his mind and a country that forgot about him as soon as he got home.

If you know a veteran, don't just thank them for their service, it just doesn't seem like enough. Even those who come home, have lost a lot. Thank them for continuing to fight, every day for those they love. They are carrying so much more than we can imagine.

hospital. Nine years later, the hospital's "Wild & Free" program was vastly extended onto 17 acres near the hospital.

The non-profit center receives no federal or state funding. It stays afloat thanks to many volunteers; membership dues; donations of time, items and money; and frequent fundraisers. The center works in cooperation with the DNR and other animal experts.

I encourage people to check out the "Wild & Free" website. If you need a day-brightener, the beautiful photos on that site will fill the bill: four fox siblings huddled together in their hutch home, eagles being released into the great blue yonder, a photo of a pitiful fawn, its left front leg immobilized by a cast, a sad but hopeful photo because at least the leg is on the mend.

If anyone needs help for an injured or orphaned critter, call 320-692-4180. The line is open 24 hours each day.

On the website, one can learn how to become a member (I just did), volunteer, donate money or give much-needed items. The website is info@wildandfree.org.

To donate with a check, send it to Wild & Free Wildlife Program, P.O. Box 241, Garrison, MN 56450.

As winter approaches, it boosts my spirits just to know that injured, orphaned or abandoned critters will be saved far and wide, thanks to places like Wild & Free and to our own humane societies closer to home.

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



# Training a Confident Dog

Socialization is the key to a well-behaved, confident dog, says Dr. Karen Becker of Mercola’s Healthy Pets.

That means that, as a young puppy, you can’t leave your dog alone in the house or backyard. They need plenty of positive interactions with other dogs and humans.

LOCAL PUPPY CLASSES

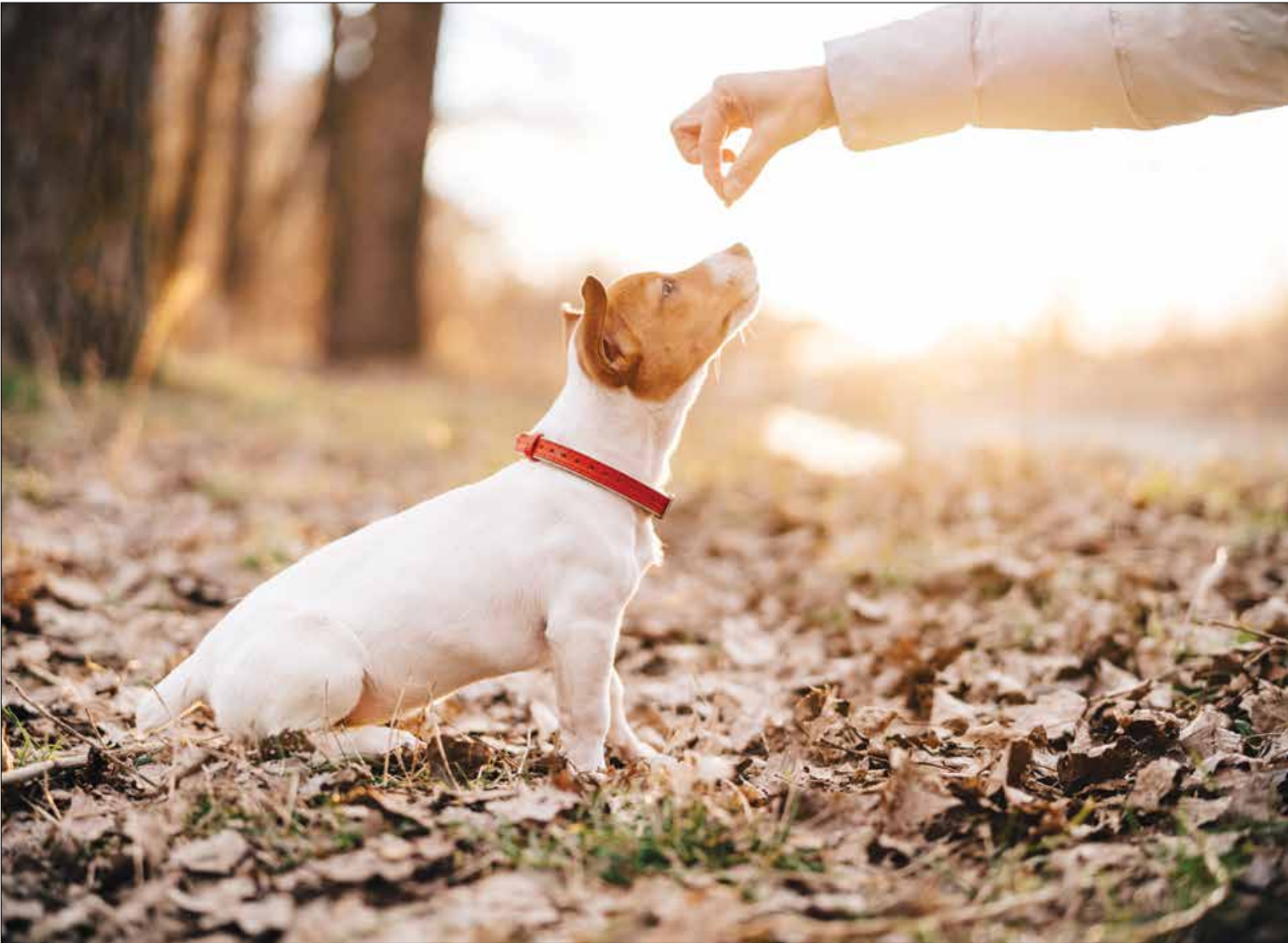
A great way to socialize a young dog is through an obedience class. Not only will your dog be exposed to new people and animals, they’ll learn lots of helpful commands to help you and them navigate life. Talk to your veterinarian or a local pet store about classes that can help you and your dog.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

A great way to socialize a dog of any age is through positive reinforcement. This means you reward good behavior (usually with a food reward, but also lots of praise and affection) and ignore poor behavior. As soon as your dog performs a desired behavior, reward him, and do it every time he responds positively to a command. You want him to connect the good behavior with the reward.

WAYS TO HELP OLDER DOGS

Socialization works better when it happens with a younger dog, but older dogs can be



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socialized, too. It just takes a lot more work and patience. Keep a sharp eye out for fear behaviors during your training, like excessive panting, crouching or even aggression, and back off if your dog needs a break.

Once you and your dog are ready, try the following tips from Chewy.com.

Obedience and agility train-

ing: Both of these are great for older dogs, too. Work with your vet or a local pet store to find a trainer that can help your adult dog learn some new tricks.

**Exposure:** If your dog is scared of a certain thing, like the vacuum cleaner, try exposing them to it in small doses and with lots of praise and treats. First, introduce the sta-

tionary, off vacuum and give the dog a treat. Once the dog takes the treat without hesitation and fear, try moving the vacuum before you give the treat. Work your way up to a running, moving vacuum. You want to change the dog’s position from fear to, at the very least, nonchalance.

Go slow: Introduce your

older dog to new people and places slowly and with lots of praise. Remember, reward good behavior and ignore bad behavior.

**Use another dog:** If your dog is comfortable around other dogs, try using that dog to model good behavior. You’ll be surprised at how quickly your pup catches on.

## Pine Cone Pet Hospital

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# Homeless

from page 4

volunteering at Place of Hope in north St. Cloud, they met many homeless people while doing intake interviews and coordination work for “Church of the Week,” a program in which churches take turns providing shelter for homeless people.

What the Fleeegels soon discovered is the homeless are brimming with good ideas but – being homeless, destitute and disconnected – most often have no way to implement them. Contrary to stereotypes, said Harry Fleeegel, the homeless do in fact go out of their way to help other homeless people. In countless discussions, the Fleeegels listened and even began meeting sessions at the St. Cloud Public Library to hear a wealth of ideas.

The following resulted from the brain-storm sessions:

*One:* A driver’s program began to help homeless people get from one place to another, such as the Salvation Army on St. Cloud’s east side and Place of Hope on St. Cloud’s north side. Bus schedules were not always conducive to the right time frames. Fleeegel and homeless individuals started a ride program since some of them had vehicles, even if they happened to be old “jalopies.” Soon, church organizations agreed to provide gas cards to the volunteer homeless drivers.

*Two:* A furniture and furnishings program began for homeless people who do finally get an apartment but have literally nothing to put in it, not even a bed. When most homeless do get an apartment via county assistance, the county takes money for a



contributed photo

**Three homeless children enjoy the donated couch in their unfurnished apartment.**

deposit and first month’s rent, Fleeegel said. That leaves nothing but four walls and maybe carpet on the floor. With help from churches, once again, the word went out for spare furniture and furnishings (cookware, etc.), and loads of stuff was donated. Homeless people did a lot of “muscle work,” loading and unloading heavy items, delivering to the new apartments of the formerly homeless or taking it to storage. The homeless came up with the idea, and the homeless manage the program.

*Three:* Some homeless people stand near streets with signs that say, in one way or another, “Help!” Quite often, Fleeegel said, motorists roll down windows and yell, “Why don’t you just go get a job?!” In discussions with those in need, Fleeegel quickly discovered the vast majority of them do, in fact, want to work, even at temporary jobs. The problems? No permanent address, no phone, no car. Employers rarely hire such “ghosts.” Fleeegel searched online and found a woman farmer in Clearwater who needed help with

picking weeds. He then went to the Salvation Army and found four guys eager to do the work. The woman was so impressed by their work, she asked for more. There were soon 12 weed-pickers, then 22. During “Project Connect,” a program at the St. Cloud Civic Center, 75 people signed up to do similar temporary jobs.

“It is just not true that homeless people do not want to work,” Fleeegel said. “Yes, in some cases there are mental disabilities or physical disabilities, but in most cases there are not. The real problem is finding enough temporary jobs and getting the homeless phones so employers can call them.”

The biggest hurdle to homelessness in the St. Cloud area, Fleeegel said, is the lack of apartments or apartments that people simply cannot afford as apartment rent prices keep soaring and so many workers keep receiving stagnant wages, leading to paycheck-to-paycheck survival with homelessness just around the corner for some people, including adults with children. A car break-

down can pitch some headlong into homeless status: fix the car to get to a job and don’t pay the rent, thus eviction can occur as the apartment residents get further behind financially. Divorce is also a breaker, Fleeegel said, with suddenly only one income, not two, to depend upon.

Other factors almost certain to lead to homelessness, he said, are expensive illnesses or injuries.

“There is no single solution to the problem,” Fleeegel said. “One thing is certain. The homeless come from every race, every religion, every age group, as young as 6 up into the 80s. And there are all levels of disabilities and mental and emotional problems, but the majority of them are just like anybody else – you or me. Sometimes homelessness is just a matter of one bad decision or a case of hard luck.”

How to help people who happen to be homeless?

Fleeegel recommends donating or volunteering generously to local homeless shelters, the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Place of Hope, Homeless Healing Homeless, churches and other organizations.

He also recommends people should open their minds and hearts to people in desperate need, including the “panhandlers” seeking help streetside.

“Some may be scammers, maybe one in 10,” he said. “But most are not. I know often they chip in money they receive from motorists and then spend that money for them and others to share a hotel room to sleep in a warm place. People should not ridicule them.”

One of Fleeegel’s instructive stories is about the man who was once homeless and lives in

this area. Despite current financial difficulties, he spends his own money on food and then cooks meals he brings to homeless people living in tents in the woods. His own cupboards at home, Fleeegel said, contain a lot of packages of Ramen noodles, for himself. That, Fleeegel said, is a classic example of how the homeless (and formerly homeless) make personal sacrifices to help others who are homeless.

The optimistic news, Fleeegel emphasized, is there is generally very good ongoing support for the homeless from the people, businesses and agencies in the St. Cloud area.

To donate to Homeless Helping Homeless, send a check to Homeless Helping Homeless, P.O. Box 475, St. Cloud, MN 56302. People can also help by donating sleeping bags, tents, gloves, coats, furniture, bedding, dishes, pots, pans, other household wares, \$10 gas cards and propane. Homeless Helping Homeless workers are also constantly seeking odd jobs to do, available apartments and trucks for hauling stuff. Text 612-868-0465.

## PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF ST. STEPHEN TRUTH IN TAXATION HEARING

The St. Stephen City Council will review the proposed 2022 budget at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021 in the St. Stephen City Hall Council Chamber, 2 Sixth Ave. SE, St. Stephen.

The public is welcome to attend this public hearing.

/s/ Julie Jacobs  
City of St. Stephen City Clerk

Publish: Nov. 12, 2021

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# What Does your Credit Score Mean?

A credit score is a three-digit number that sums up all the information in your credit report into one number.

You may have two credit scores, one called a FICO score and the other a VantageScore. The FICO score dates from the mid-1980s, while the VantageScore is a more modern invention designed to produce a more consistent score across the three credit reporting agencies.

**FICO SCORES**

FICO scores, named for the Fair Isaac company that started them, range from 300-850. There's no definition of a good or bad score, but you can generally consider the mid-600s the dividing line between better rates and terms.

**VANTAGESCORES**

Vantage Scores, on the other hand, range from 501-990. Super prime borrowers have a score from 901-990, and they get a lender's best rates and terms for credit. Prime plus borrowers, with a score from 802-900, get good rates and terms. Prime borrowers score from 701-800 and get generally reasonable rates and terms. Non-prime borrowers score from 601-700 and high-risk borrowers get from 501-600. High-risk borrowers are generally not offered credit.



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**HOW IT'S CALCULATED**

Both VantageScores and FICO scores weigh your payment history – if you've made payments on time – and the number of new credit inquiries in your history when they calculate your score. VantageScores, however,

emphasize how much of your available credit you use. FICO scores, on the other hand, emphasize the length of your credit history and the types of credit you're using. A home loan may score better than a store credit card, for example.

**IMPROVING YOUR CREDIT SCORE**

To boost your credit score, pay your bills – all of them – on time every month. Try not to use more than 30% of the credit you're approved for at any given time, and pay off any balances as soon as you can. Keep

the number of credit inquiries in a year low. An exception is made for insurance, mortgages and auto loans because lenders expect you'll shop around for these products. You should also have a good mix of types of loans, including credit cards, auto loans and personal loans.



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