

Inclusive playground

It gets City Council approval

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\$12K is kids' goal

Raising funds in cancer fight

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Coyotes make it two in a row

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SHAKOPEE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2016

VALLEY NEWS \$1

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Jackson Elementary Principal Doug Schleif, left, leads a group of new teachers on tour of the school this week.



Bridge closings may overlap at Shakopee, Jordan

Two Scott County river crossing projects will be cutting it close.

An overlay project on County Road 9 means that the Minnesota River crossing near Jordan will be closed until at least Saturday, according to Scott County Construction Manager Len Laxen.

Meanwhile, the County Road 101 Minnesota River bridge in Shakopee is scheduled to be closed for two weeks starting Monday. "Our intention was for the Jordan crossing to open up on [Aug.] 13th, and 101 would [start] the 15th," Laxen said. However, the County Road 9 contractor's milling machine broke down, so the closures could ultimately overlap a couple of days, he said.

The closures of both bridges would lead to high traffic levels at Highway 41 in downtown Chaska — the only Minnesota River crossing between the Bloomington Ferry Bridge and the Belle Plaine bridge.

"It does become a huge concern to us," said Chaska City Administrator Matt Podhradsky. "It's pretty similar to the flood when you only have one river crossing open," he said.

To try to open County Road 9 by Saturday, Laxen said crews will continue construction while flag people direct traffic. However, he added: "We can't plan for weather."

COUNTY ROAD 101

Crews are overlaying County Road 9,

Bridge to 15 >

BACK TO SCHOOL

(early)

Changes already begin at Shakopee schools

BY AMANDA MCKNIGHT | amcknight@swpub.com

Shakopee students will be putting away their swimsuits and digging out their backpacks early this year. While most students in Minnesota start school after Labor Day on Sept. 5, Shakopee students will start about two weeks earlier, on Aug. 22, so they get out of school earlier in the spring to allow for work to start on the expansion at Shakopee High School.

School to 15 >

PHOTOS BY AMANDA MCKNIGHT



Third-grade teacher Sarah Hartman gets her classroom ready two weeks before school starts.



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SCHOOL

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Although the high school addition doesn't open until fall 2018, school district officials say there's plenty to be excited about in the meantime.

Jeff Pawlicki, executive principal at Shakopee High School, said teachers have been preparing for the latest technology rollout, which will happen before school starts this year.

As a result of the voter-approved technology levy, students in 10th through 12th grades will each receive a MacBook computer. This is the first year high school students will have their own district-provided devices.

"Looking into this school year, that's a really exciting piece," said Pawlicki. "Students will have constant access to that technology in all their classes. With that, we have professional development for teachers on how to use that technology in the classroom."

Construction begins on the high school addition this fall, so along with the excitement of the MacBook rollout, teachers and students will be getting used to the new surroundings. Classes shouldn't be affected too much, though, said Pawlicki.

"For the most part it really will be business as usual," he said. "Along the way we're going to have mild disturbances here and there, but we aren't anticipating anything that should have an impact on student learning."

Pawlicki, who started as executive principal on July 11, comes from Wayzata High School, where he worked as an assistant principal through construction at that school all of last year.

"Having gone through this for the full school year last year, you just have to be prepared for unintended

things that come up and you have to be flexible," he said. "Contractors typically know during school hours to avoid certain work that could impact that."

Academic expansion is already under way at the high school as the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program is adding a business administration and management program. As part of that program, the district will partner with RiverSouth, a collaboration between Canterbury Park, Mystic Lake, the Renaissance Festival and Valleyfair.

The CAPS program is an elective program for juniors and seniors that immerses students into authentic career experiences with the help of local business partners. Students in the program earn dual credit with Shakopee High School and Normandale Community College. This will be the second year of CAPS; last year's program offerings included digital design and health care, which will both be offered again.

Superintendent Dr. Rod Thompson said he's thrilled about the expansion of the CAPS program.

"We are excited to get the opportunity to partner with the best in the entertainment and tourism industry," said Thompson. "Shakopee is lucky to have these businesses and our students are fortunate to be able to work with them. We are looking forward to expanding our successes in the CAPS program."

MOVING UP

The high school isn't the only place where change is afoot. In elementary schools across the district, second-graders will be receiving iPads for the first time. There will be one iPad for every two students.

"Last year kindergarten and first grade had iPads, and second-grade students will be

using iPads this year," said Sweeney Elementary Principal Melissa Zahn.

Along with the iPad addition, each elementary school will now have three mobile carts of Chrome books for third- through fifth-graders to share.

"As far as technology goes, that's one of the bigger things right now," said Zahn.

In many schools throughout the district, teachers and staff are experimenting with different classroom arrangements that allow for more collaborative learning.

"When they did the new all-day kindergarten, all kindergarten classrooms got new furniture," Zahn explained. "They really wanted to make it into collaborative spaces, not just straight and narrow desks, so at Sweeney we have taken that and expanded it to our first and second grade. There's lots of options for rearranging rooms. They're really excited about it."

Although Red Oak Elementary doesn't have new furniture, Principal Mitch Perrine said some of the teachers are trying new things with what they have on hand.

"We're trying some different things with different kinds of tables and different seating options," said Perrine. "We're trying it out to see what kids prefer and what seems to work well."

Lori Link, principal at West Junior High, said her school is getting new furniture for the physics labs due to a curriculum change in which all ninth-graders will be required to take physics.

"The typical ninth-grade science class was called physical science and it's really half a year of introductory chemistry and half a year of introductory physics," Link explained. "Now the ninth-graders will take a true physics course. Our teachers have been busy doing modeling training, which is a way of

training using collaborative groups."

"Physics really gets kids practicing authentic problem-solving skills early on," she added.

Along with the physics curriculum change, the junior high schools will be offering new electives.

"We have a new course called 'medical interventions,' which is really microbiology and engineering all in one," said Link. "We have some new physical education courses - one is called 'fit for life' and one is called 'sport performance.' Kids get to choose the type of activity that fits their lifestyle. There's some great stuff, there really is."

NEW FACES

As with each school year, there are new faces around the district. With Pawlicki joining the administrative team as executive principal at the high school also came two new assistant principals - Sarah Jordan, who previously worked for Eden Prairie Public Schools, and Scott Doran, previously dean of students at the high school.

"We no longer have deans," explained Pawlicki. "We have three assistant principals, and two of them are new. I feel really good about how we're set up and all the new faces on board and all the perspectives that they bring to help students. I'm really excited about that."

The Excellence with Equity team that was new as of last school year is expanding into the junior high school and will also be working with elementary students.

"That will be districtwide now instead of just at the high school," said Denise Doran, communications specialist. "We added staff at East and West Junior Highs. They'll be working with students within those schools with a goal of closing the achievement gap. They met with all students

and their parents, because they want to educate parents as well."

As the district grows and more students enroll, new teachers and some special education staff are being hired, as well.

"As we do every year, we hired a great group of new teachers that are really going to add to our team and our family," said Link. "We're pretty tight [for physical space] over here, but we make it work. We are able to keep our class sizes in a normal range, but we don't have anybody in a set classroom all day."

"The bonus of having more students and more teachers is the ability to offer all those elective courses because we have enough students requesting those," Link added. "That's the glass-is-half-full thing."

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BRIDGE

▶ continued from 1

between Highway 169 and the Minnesota River bridge. They needed to wait until after the Scott County Fair ended on July 31 to get started, Laxen said.

The County Road 101 closure is due to maintenance work, including bridge and joint repair, sealing of bridge deck cracks, an approach

panel concrete overlay and pavement markings.

Assistant Scott County Highway Engineer Curt Kobilarcsik said recent inspections to the main channel bridge in Shakopee, which runs for a couple hundred feet before the new primary

County Road 101 bridge into Carver County, identified deficiencies that need to be addressed. The improvements could not be done in conjunction with the County Road 101 bridge work last summer, he said.

He said workers will re-

place the bridge's expansion joint and the north panel. Joints throughout the bridge will have their glands updated.

"Now we are at the point where we do have to go ahead and make these improvements," Kobilarcsik said.

BIRTH

Boegeman



Howard Stephen Boegeman

Derek Boegeman and Carrie Spandl-Boegeman are excited to announce the birth of their son, Howard Stephen Boegeman.

Howard was born in Waconia on July 19, 2016, weighing 7lbs 14oz and 18.5 inches long.

Grandparents are Eleanor Boegeman and the late Elmer Boegeman of Minnetonka; Steve and Carol Spandl of Shakopee.

He is welcomed home by big brothers; Tyler, 11 years old and Ollie, 2 years old.

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TASTE OF SHAKOPEE



PHOTOS BY ANDREW HAZZARCO

Aurello Mendez, owner of Taco Loco, serves up a taco alongside his wife, Maria, and daughter, Jessica at the Taste of Shakopee last Friday night. Taco Loco was among the local restaurants to bring a booth to the festival, which was held in downtown Shakopee and hosted by the Shakopee Jaycees.

Maren Toward putts at the Taste of Shakopee on Friday while her older brothers Landon, left, and Linus look on. The Towards are the grandchildren of Shakopee resident Mary White.



CAPS adding business program

Shakopee Public Schools has announced the addition of a third Shakopee CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) program for this fall.

CAPS will be partnering with RiverSouth, a collaboration between Canterbury Park, Mystic Lake, the Renaissance Festival and Valleyfair for the Business Administration and Management Program.

"We are excited to get the opportunity to partner with the best in the entertainment and tourism industry," said school Superintendent Dr. Rod Thompson. "Shakopee is lucky to have these businesses and our students are fortunate to be able to work with them. We are looking forward to expanding our successes in the CAPS program."

Students in the Business Administration and Management Program will have the opportunity to experience full-immersion into a collaboration between state and nationally recognized entertainment and tourism businesses.

"As an education center, Valleyfair is committed to

providing unique opportunities for students to learn and grow as professionals," said Dave Frazier, general manager at Valleyfair. "The work that these students do has a direct impact on the success of our operation and it's been very rewarding for us."

Students will learn from leading experts in business management including entertainment, attractions, hotels, restaurants, food service and marketing.

The CAPS Program is an elective program for juniors and seniors that immerse students into authentic career experiences with the help of local business partners. Students will earn dual credit with Shakopee High School and Normandale Community College. They spend their first semester on site at a business partner and second semester immersed in an internship experience.

Learn more about the Shakopee CAPS program at www.shakopecaps.org. On Monday, there will be a parent/student open house at Canterbury Park for students that have already enrolled.



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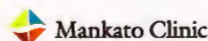
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Inclusive playground gets green light

BY ANDREW HAZZARD
ahazzard@swpub.com

Shakopee will soon be home to an inclusive playground where people of all developmental levels will be able to play, explore and learn.

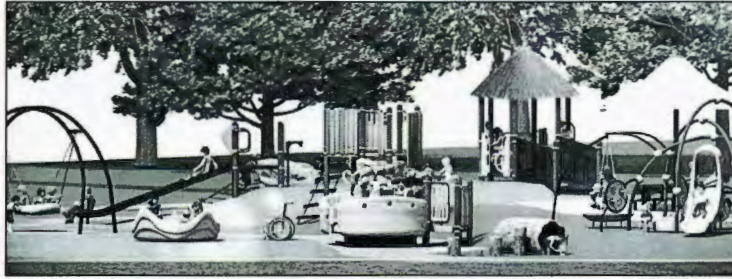
The Shakopee City Council on Wednesday last week voted unanimously to begin the process of installing a \$400,000 inclusive playground at Lions Park, feeling confident that approximately \$45,000 in donations still needed will be found.

Parks and Recreation Director Jamie Polley said the Fun For All Taskforce, an organization committed to making the playground a reality, has raised \$318,526 in cash and \$35,000 worth of in-kind donations for the playground.

The park started off with \$195,000 in initial funding; \$150,000 from the city; \$40,000 from the Lions Club; and \$5,000 from the Valley Lions.

Contributions to the playground have come in sizes big and small. In May, the Shakopee Mdwakanton Sioux Community contributed \$50,000 to the project. Many local residents have chipped in as much as \$5,000.

In July, the Shakopee Lions Club donated an additional \$10,000 to the project. Around \$1,600 was brought in from a fund-raising event at Pizza Ranch on June 20. Thousand-



SUBMITTED IMAGE

A rendering of the concept for the Shakopee Fun for All Playground at Lions Park.

dollar donations also came from individuals and companies such as Cub Foods, Hennen's Auto Service and Northland Forest Products. Polley said 52 individuals or organizations have donated to the project thus far.

The Fun For All Taskforce is confident it will reach its fundraising goal. Around \$356,000 has been collected for the park, but donations are still coming. On her way into the City Council meeting, Polley was told by Shakopee Public Utilities that it will be putting in \$3,300.

Polley said the Shakopee Rotary Club is considering donating a musical playground that will be adjacent to the Fun For All Playground.

Regarding the playground equipment, Jamie Polley said it differs from typical playgrounds because there's some-

thing for everyone, and much of it helps with learning and development.

"An inclusive playground has poured-in-place surfacing, so it's easier to navigate," she explained. "The other part is it includes equipment that has more sensory functions, so there's activities that stimulate your visual senses, your touch and feel senses, as well as different land forms helping kids with balance and working on activities that challenge them a little bit."

The poured-in-place surfacing is what truly sets the park apart, and where most of the costs come from. Installing the surfacing before winter is the goal for the city, Polley said.

City Council members took time to acknowledge the work Councilor Mike Luce committed to the project over the past

several months.

"The momentum that's gone into this, I don't see us not raising that money," said Councilor Kathi Mocol. "I would like to say that I think the community is basically saying with their dollars, this is something they want to spend their money on."

Councilor Matt Lehman made a motion to move ahead with the project this year, and was seconded by Mocol.

"I think that we're close enough, and I'd also like to say that even if we don't meet the goal that the remainder would come out of the park reserve [fund]," Lehman said.

The motion to begin construction in 2016 passed unanimously, and the council agreed to revisit any additional needed funding if the remainder could not be raised from the community.

City OKs school district ice arena lease

BY ANDREW HAZZARD
ahazzard@swpub.com

After weeks of negotiations and altering contracts, the city of Shakopee and Shakopee School District have reached a lease agreement for the high school hockey program at the city's new ice arena.

The City Council voted in a split decision on Wednesday last week to enter into a 10-year lease with the Shakopee School District for \$125,000 per year.

This is the third time the council has considered the contract, which has been passing back and forth between the School Board and City Council since May with both sides making tweaks to the agreement.

The original agreement called for a 20-year lease, which the City Council believed was too long.

This version will be the final agreement, as the School Board passed the same version July 25.

Under the agreement,

the school district would pay the city \$125,000 each year as a user fee for boys' and girls' hockey. The contract specifies that the fee covers:

- 26 game blocks of 4.5 hours.
- 402 hours of available ice time for practice.
- The lease of two team rooms.

The final version of the contract is very similar to the one the City Council approved on May 24, which allowed for both the city

and school district to pull out of the agreement. The School Board last week added language that would prevent the termination of the lease in the middle of the season, and make it so neither side could terminate the lease in the first five years.

Councilor Jay Whiting made the motion to approve the agreement, and was seconded by Kathi Mocol. It passed 3 to 2, with Councilors Mike Luce and Matt Lehman opposed.

CenturyLink to be new cable option in Shakopee

Shakopee residents will soon have a choice to make when it comes to choosing a provider for internet, phone and television services.

Following a public hearing on Wednesday last week, the Shakopee City Council unanimously approved allowing CenturyLink to establish a cable franchise in the city for five years, with a potential five-year extension.

Last year, CenturyLink approached the city about establishing a cable franchise in Shakopee, which is now

contracted with Comcast. The agreement allows CenturyLink to compete with Comcast in Shakopee. Comcast has been the lone cable franchise in the city since 2004. Its franchise agreement runs through 2019.

Under the federal Cable Act, a franchising authority can award one or more franchises within its jurisdiction to promote competition.

CenturyLink provides Qwest phone and internet services and Prism TV.

Under the agreement, Cen-

CenturyLink must be able to provide coverage to at least 60 percent of city households. The firm will also provide complimentary service to the new city hall and Shakopee High School.

Brian Grogan, an attorney who handles franchise agreements for Shakopee, reminded the council that under the federal Cable Act entities are required to accept "reasonable" proposals to add franchises in their cities.

CenturyLink will include a government access channel

and an education channel, and will charge 40 cents per month, per subscriber to cover the costs.

Mayor Bill Mars said he believes the franchise agreement will boost competition and benefit Shakopee consumers.

Councilor Matt Lehman made the motion to approve the agreement after the public hearing was closed; he was seconded by Councilor Mike Luce. The motion passed unanimously.

Andrew Hazzard

BACK TO SCHOOL IN
Style

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Shakopee students outperform state in test scores

BY AMANDA MCKNIGHT
amcknight@swpub.com

While Minnesota students as a whole didn't see much of an increase in scores in the 2016 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA-III) tests, Shakopee students continue to excel in math and reading in comparison to their peers.

The MCA tests are given in reading, math and science each year to students in grades three through eight, 10 and 11.

"If you look back from the last five years, we have a trend of going up every year," said Dave Orlowsky, the Shakopee School District's data and testing administrator.

According to data released by the Minnesota Department of Education on July

28, a total of 66.4 percent of Shakopee students scored proficient in reading, while only 59.7 percent of students across Minnesota scored the same.

Shakopee sixth-graders stole the show by scoring the highest of all grade levels on the reading portion of the assessment, with a proficiency rate of 75.7 percent.

"The [Pearson] Sixth Grade Center does a great job aligning what they're doing in the classroom to the state standards," said Orlowsky.

Although sixth-graders



Dave Orlowsky

are ahead of the pack with reading, there is a drop-off in proficiency ratings for Shakopee seventh graders, with 59.5 percent scoring proficient in reading.

That drop-off could be attributed to a number of factors, Orlowsky said.

"In some sense, the test is harder in seventh grade," he said. "But we are seeing our performance drop there, as well. What we need to do from a teaching and learning perspective is make sure we know what the state standards are and make sure our instruction is aligned with that."

While Shakopee students are clearly ahead of the state in terms of reading, their proficiency rates increased less than half a percentage point from the previous

year's MCA results, so there is still work to be done.

"We mirrored the state. The state was kind of flat, and we stayed kind of flat but up ever so slightly," explained Orlowsky. "The multi-year trend is still steady and positive."

In math, 65.7 percent of Shakopee students tested as proficient, compared to 59.4 percent of students statewide.

Shakopee third-graders came out on top this year with a math proficiency rate of 78 percent, although that number is down slightly from last year's proficiency rate of 79.4 percent.

Science is the subject in which Shakopee students scored the lowest, generally. Districtwide, 57.5 percent of students scored proficient

in science, compared to 54.7 percent statewide. However, this year's science scores are an improvement over last year's rate of 54.8 percent, especially among high school students who took the test. High school students' proficiency rates in science increased from 45.9 percent to 55.7 percent in just one year, and Orlowsky said he hopes to see that percentage continue to climb as new curriculum initiatives are put in place.

The district is implementing a course change for ninth-graders in the coming school year. It will be the first year ninth-graders will take physics as their first science class. Orlowsky said similar programs in other districts have yielded "tremendous results over time" in terms

of students' proficiency and understanding.

"In the high school, where we were nearly 10 [percentage] points below the state last year, this year they are only about one point below," he explained. "Longer term, our elementary schools have rolled out a Project Lead the Way science curriculum. It's a skill and performance based, engaging science program. We are hoping that ... over time we will see significant growth in our science results."

Until then, district officials are just happy to be seeing progress, even if it's slow.

"It is important to remember that student learning is not linear," said Orlowsky. "Results may vary year-to-year, but we are always striving for positive growth."

Kids' goal: to raise \$12,000

A visit to a children's lemonade stand will come with a deep impact in Shakopee this month.

For the past four years, Mollie and Ferrel have raised more than \$17,000 for the Pinky Swear Foundation, an organization that helps families with children afflicted by cancer pay living expenses.

This year, Mollie, 12, and Ayden, 8, the children of Que and Kim Ferrel, are attempting to raise \$12,000 for the organization by setting up a lemonade stand in Shakopee. They have raised more than



SUBMITTED PHOTO

For the past four years, Mollie and Ferrel have raised more than \$17,000 for the Pinky Swear Foundation, an organization that helps families with children afflicted by cancer pay living expenses. They are selling lemonade in an effort to raise another \$12,000.

\$6,000 thus far.

Mollie and Ayden will be operating a lemonade stand on the corner of Brittany Drive and 17th Avenue Mon-

day through Friday until Aug. 20.

More on the Pinky Swear Foundation can be found at www.pinkyswear.org.

37-year ride at Valleyfair closing Aug. 21

A signature thrill ride for 37 years at Shakopee amusement park Valleyfair will spin out on Aug. 21.

The Enterprise, a large wheel with 20 tandem-style cars that spins in circles and tilts on its axis until perpendicular to the ground, and whose riders are kept in their seats by positive G-forces, will close and make way for a new, undisclosed attraction, Valleyfair officials announced this week.

The ride, named after the starship USS Enterprise from the "Star Trek" television series, entertained an estimated 15.5 million riders since it opened in 1979, Val-



VALLEYFAIR PHOTO

The Enterprise is one of Valleyfair's oldest rides.

leyfair officials said.

The amusement park plans

a closing ceremony at 10 p.m. on that final Sunday.

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COMMENTARY

LETTERS

FISH partners change lives

Families and Individuals Sharing hope (FISH) is a network of individuals representing the faith community, nonprofits, service organizations, businesses, and government entities in Scott County, whose mission is to "partner together to meet human need so individuals will be able to live healthy, transformed lives." There are 104 partners representing these sectors.

Home and automobile repairs, temporary financial hardship, school and youth support, household items, and transportation issues are common needs that are met through the compassion and generosity of our partners.

Here is just one example of a need fulfilled recently by a local bank, a local car dealer, a local church, and a group of volunteers. These partners responded to this need and positively changed the lives of a young family that is experiencing homelessness. The family was in need of a reliable vehicle that would allow the mother to get to and from a job that she had recently secured. She had been able to save some money toward the purchase, but it was not enough to purchase a reliable vehicle. Through the care, concern, and generosity of these partners, her savings were matched and a loan was secured to purchase the vehicle, and volunteers were able to make some additional necessary repairs on the vehicle. This life-changing experience enabled the woman to keep her job and continue to make progress toward the family's goal of an affordable, secure, permanent home.

Stories like these are common through the network and represent thousands of dollars in financial, time,

and service contributions that not only positively impact people's lives but save taxpayer dollars through partners' donations rather than government services.

I would like to take this opportunity to give a huge shout-out to all of our partners who repeatedly and generously open their hearts and wallets to improve the lives of those in our community who are experiencing hardship. You are making a difference, and we appreciate all that you do!

Bethany Tjornhom Chanhassen

The writer is executive director of FISH.

Academies offers intimate education

I am energized and ready for the 2016-2017 school year. This summer, I had the opportunity to be part of the Master Plan Writing Team consisting of teachers, parents, community members, district administration, and business partners. This team was put together to help write the plan that will help the district implement the Academies of Shakopee in fall 2018.

You may have seen the article about it in last week's Shakopee Valley News. It was full of great information about the process, but what I want to write about is my excitement for the future. Although I've always believed in the quality of Shakopee's academics and programming and am proud to be a teacher at the high school, I am confident that our approach with the Academies of Shakopee will better serve ALL of our students.

As a teacher, I challenge students to find connections and explore their passions. One of the greatest parts of Shakopee's future in education lies in this new

approach that we've been working on for the last few years. Throughout our work this summer, we tapped into various resources under the direction of Ford Next Generation Learning. By looking at other schools that have already implemented the Academies approach, we used some of their ideas then developed our own to meet our students' needs.

Given that Shakopee High School will be one of the largest high schools in the state, I am excited that we are embracing the academies model because seven smaller learning communities will give students a more intimate education experience. Students will have the opportunity of working with a core team of teachers, administrators, counselors, deans, equity specialists, and peers. To offer more flexibility, we will also give students the option of taking classes out of their main academy. So, if Health Sciences students wish to take an Engineering and Manufacturing course, they can. In addition to creating smaller learning communities, I'm excited about the partnerships/mentorships that we will foster between schools and local businesses. Giving students hands-on experiences will give them insight to better prepare for college and career choices as well as instill more pride in their community.

I am proud to be a part of Shakopee's community and have seen many changes in the 22 years that I've taught here. Preparing for the Academies of Shakopee has been an energizing opportunity, and I look forward to it coming to fruition in the fall of 2018. If you'd like more information, please visit our district's website.

Carmen Barbone Shakopee

Education 'second to none' is coming

I am really excited for students in the Shakopee Public Schools. Even more so, I am excited for our entire community at large.

This summer, I served on the Master Planning Committee for the Academies of Shakopee. I interacted with parents, teachers, business partners, as well as school and city officials that had come together to create an E-12 education plan that utilizes a model considered "best practice" in education. This plan will benefit the entire community by creating active relationships between students and our local business and service institutions. The academy model ultimately creates pathways for students to attain the skills and training needed to be a part of our local work force and economy while contributing to the Shakopee community as vibrant, active citizens.

The magnitude of the Planning Committee's collaboration, hard work, and commitment to our students was greater than any other project I have seen in all of my 25 years teaching at Shakopee High School. It was exciting to get to know these people — our people — on a personal level. To see their excitement for our students' future and the synergy it created was truly inspiring.

Our daughters and sons will be able to experience an education that will be second to none, which is perfect. Why would we want anything less for our community?

Michael Kovic Chanhassen

The writer is a vocal music teacher at Shakopee High School.

the wood. I mowed without noticing the sweet smell of fresh-cut grass. I sprayed for weeds without regard to their strength and tenacity.

Summer days are long, but the summertime is short. We have more time during the day to take it all in, but we have few days in which to do so. Inversely, the winter days are short, but the winter drags.

On many winter nights I find serenity within the words of a good book and the warmth of the wood stove. Often it is because it is too cold and dark to be outside, and there is not that much to do out there anyway that I find myself inside.

But it's not cold and dark yet. It's true that the summer is busy and it

goes by too fast; maybe it's because we make it so.

Sunday afternoons in August: what a wonderful time to enjoy life.

Jerry Kucera of Sand Creek Township owns a Shakopee insurance agency and is a Valley News community columnist. Read his past columns on his blog: www.jerrykucera.blogspot.com.

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Paid election letters policy

Letters in support of or opposing a candidate or particular political party as well as letters from candidates on the November ballot will be published as Paid Election Letters. This policy will be in effect May 17 for county, state and federal races and Aug. 2 for local school and city races and run through the November general election.

The Paid Election Letters will cost \$25 per paper for a letter up to 250 words. Candidates or residents who would like to submit a letter more than 250 words (in support of or opposing a candidate or particular political party) will be referred to our display advertising department and be charged display rates.

Letters must be paid for by the letter writer, and payment must be received prior to a Paid Election Letter being published. If paid for by someone other than the letter writer, information about who is paying for the letter must be included, according to election law.

Paid Election Letters must include the writer's name and city of residence, which will be published with the letter, along with a daytime telephone number, which will be used for collecting payment.

Group written letters won't be accepted as Paid Election Letters. The maximum number of people allowed to be listed on a letter is two per household.

In rare cases, the newspaper might determine it legitimate for an elected official to submit a letter to the editor (unpaid) on a specific issue where the official has been identified in the newspaper — either in a news story or Paid Election Letter. Final judgment in such cases will be made by the Shakopee Valley News editorial staff.

The newspaper makes the final decision on whether letters will be published. We will not print letters of a libelous nature.

Paid Election Letters will not run in the last issue before the election.

Paid Election Letters should be submitted to the Valley News by email at editor@shakopeenews.com. For more information, call Editor Pat Minelli at 952-345-6680.

Payment for Paid Election Letters needs to be received by 4 p.m. Thursday to be published in the following week's newspaper.

KUCERA

► continued from 6

For instance, yesterday (Saturday) I was up early as I had so much to do. I cut and hauled tree limbs and branches most of the day from the yard to the brush pile and not once did I marvel at the shape of the leaves or the grain of

Cops are cracking down.

DRUNK DRIVING
OVER THE LIMIT. UNDER ARREST.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT