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Get ahead on New Year's resolutions

After the rush of the holiday season has largely ended, and the excess of the season starts to weigh on celebrants' minds, it is customary for many people to start thinking about the changes they want to implement in the new year. According to a Pew Research Center survey of United States adults conducted in January 2024, 30 percent of people reported making at least one resolution, with half of this group making more than one.

The survey also found that young adults are the most likely to make New Year's resolutions, with 49 percent of those between the ages 18 and 29 saying they have made a resolution.

It's never too early to start thinking about what to improve upon in 2025, or which goals to set. Here are some common resolutions and how to implement them.

· **Exercise more.** Getting in shape is one of the most popular New Year's resolutions every year. Gym memberships spike and people often invest in home exercise equipment around this time of year. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, wearable technology continues to be a top trend in fitness and has been a mainstay since 2016. While Fitbit and the Apple Watch series have remained strong contenders, one also may want to invest in the Garmin Vivomove, which boasts wireless charging. Tracking fitness goals can keep those resolutions going strong.

· **Improve mental well-being.** Getting in shape is not the only health-related goal this time of year. Mental health also comes into play when people make their resolutions. Taking opportunities

to slow down and be more mindful can help. One way to do so is through journaling. Human behavior expert and author Natalie Friscia Pancetti, says journaling reduces stress, helps with anxiety, encourages confidence, and can improve perceptions. This is why she developed a journal with inspirational writing prompts as a companion to her "This Too" book and planner.

· **Quit smoking.** Quitting smoking is a worthy goal. Health care experts know smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer and has been linked to more than 27 diseases. Many people want to quit smoking, but the Mayo Clinic says only about 5 percent of people who try to quit succeed without a smoking cessation product. Nicotine replacement items are some of the most popular smoking cessation tools. For those who want to go drug-free, Pūm is a device that addresses the three major components of habit formation that occur with smoking. Employing flavored air, the device replaces the fixation of the hand-to-mouth habit with non-addictive plant extracts that are inhaled, simulating smoking without the negative effects.

· **Learn a new language.** Learning a new skill or language is another popular resolution. Today there are many apps available to help people learn one or more new languages. From Duolingo to Babbel to Memrise, there are programs available whether one is a visual learner or wants to jump right into specific phrases.

Many people get a jumpstart on identifying their resolutions in early- to mid-December so they'll be ready to move forward come New Year's Day.



Win-E-Mac School Board members Sarah Strom and Jim Ferden have officially stepped down from serving on the Board. Both didn't seek re-election this past Fall. Sarah has served on the Board for the past eight years along with being the Board Clerk for several years. Jim has served on the Board for the past 16 years, 15 of which were spent as the Board Chairman. During this time, he also served on the Region 1 Information Management Services Joint Powers Board for 13 years in the positions of Treasurer and Vice-Chairman. Congratulations to both on your years of service. Board member Tyler Brekken received a Directors Award Certificate from the Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) for attending 100 hours of training sessions and meetings over the past four years of serving on the Board. Tyler was re-elected to the Board in the past Fall's election.(l-r) Sarah Strom, Jim Ferden, and Tyler Brekken.



Santa and Mrs. Claus were able to see all the Kaupang kids during a Very Merry McIntosh. Pictured with the Clauses are Lauren, Jackson, Emma and Grace.



Last week Sheriff Jim Tadman and The Polk County Sheriff's Office were presented with a plaque from the National Child Safety Council celebrating 60 years of working together to provide life saving materials for both young people and adults.

Fire and carbon monoxide home safety tips

As we sit amongst the cold days of winter, we are mindful of the dangers that lurk in our homes at this time of year. With that in mind, the three Safe Kids Coalitions in North Dakota would like to offer some tips to keep you and your loved ones safe from fire and carbon monoxide dangers in your homes. In 2020, there were 228 fatalities and 71,767 ER visits related to fire and burn injuries for children in the US. In order to prevent injuries and deaths from fire in your home, keep the following tips in mind:

- Install smoke alarms. If your home already has smoke alarms, be sure to test them each month and change the batteries as needed. Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Create a home fire escape plan, including 2 ways out of every room. Be sure to consider anyone in the house with special needs in this plan as exit plans may look different for those with disabilities.
- Choose a meeting place outside that is a safe distance away from your home and is accessible to everyone in the house.
- Practice your home fire escape plan, including meeting in your designated place. Ensure

that everyone in the house can hear and/or see the fire alarms when they are going off.

- There are smoke/fire and CO detectors for people with disabilities such as the hearing or visually impaired. They provide a warning via an alternative mode of communication. Consider installing one of these if you have someone that has these types of disabilities.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is another concern, especially during the colder weather months. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that you can't see, taste, or smell. This gas is released when combustion occurs, as in generators or car engines. CO can also be released when normal household appliances, such as clothes dryers or water heaters, malfunction. This deadly gas accounts for over 20,000 ER visits and 184 deaths of children in the US each year. Children are more susceptible to the effects of carbon monoxide, as their young bodies cannot adapt to the lack of oxygen. The symptoms of CO poisoning can mimic those of the flu or COVID 19. Symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, nausea, drowsiness, and confusion. To keep your home CO free, consider these tips:

- Make sure your home has carbon monoxide alarms. There should be at least 1 alarm on each level of the home, especially near the sleeping areas, and at least 15 feet away from fuel burning appliances.
- Never leave your car running while it is in the garage. The wind can blow the car's exhaust back into the house and cause CO poisoning.
- Never use a grill or generator inside your home. These appliances generate carbon monoxide and can quickly cause poisoning.
- If you suspect a CO leak in your home, leave the building and call 911 immediately.

With both fire and carbon monoxide, awareness is the first step to prevention. Having alarms for both smoke and carbon monoxide in addition to testing them each month can truly save a life.

This information has been shared by the Safe Kids Coalitions of North Dakota. For more information on this topic, other childhood injury prevention areas, or to find the contact information for your local Safe Kids Coalition, please contact Carma Hanson, Coordinator of Safe Kids Grand Forks at 701.780.1872 or safekids@altru.org.

RiverView offers monthly CPR classes

Whether you need CPR certification to fulfill a job requirement or simply want the knowledge to know what to do in an emergency, RiverView Health has a class for you.

RiverView offers two CPR classes on the second Thursday of each month – one for certification and the other provided free of charge for general knowledge.

RiverView's HeartSaver CPR AED (automated external defibrillator) class is for those needing certification. The cost is \$55; this includes the HeartSaver CPR AED eCard and book. This class is 4 hours (6-10 pm) with a test at the end of the session.

The Friends and Family class is for those who do not need certification.

This class is free of charge thanks to the generous support of Crookston American Legion Post 20. Participants will learn

basic information about what to do in life-threatening situations and will receive a Friends and Family CPR book. This class is 4 hours (6-10 pm); no test or card is given at completion.

Classes will take place on the following Thursdays in 2025:

- January 9
- February 13
- March 13
- April 10
- May 8
- June 12
- July 10
- August 14
- September 11
- October 9
- November 13
- December 11

All classes are held in the RiverView Home Care Building, 721 S. Minnesota Street, Crookston. Registration is required, and payment for the HeartSaver class must be

made at the time of registration.

To register or for more information, call 281-9536.

RiverView offers these classes as part of its American Heart Association (AHA) Community Training Center. Contracted Community Training Centers, like RiverView, are the only sites permitted to offer AHA classes to the public and professionals through their affiliated instructors and programs.

The AHA is not responsible for any fees for these classes. The AHA strongly promotes knowledge and proficiency in all AHA classes and has developed instructional materials. Using these materials in an educational class does not represent sponsorship by the AHA. Fees charged for a class, except for a portion for AHA materials, do not represent income to the AHA.



Cannon and Piper Schow, along with mom, Amanda, visit with Santa during A Very Merry McIntosh held on Saturday, December 7th.

Tips to make a computer run more smoothly

The spinning color wheel on a computer screen is an unwelcome sight. Despite that, it's a frustration familiar to millions of computer users across the globe and indicative of a device that's overwhelmed.

Though there's never a good time to see the spinning color wheel, it tends to appear at those moments when users are particularly busy or staring down important deadlines. Some computers experience diminished performance due to age, but oftentimes users have options other than replacement when their devices aren't running smoothly.

- **Turn off automatic startups.** The more applications that are running at a given time, the slower a computer is likely to perform. And users

may not realize just how many apps are running on their computers at one time. Many apps may be starting automatically whenever a user restarts his or her computer, and these programs could be running in the background. Individuals who suspect this might be why their devices are operating inefficiently can go into their application settings and turn off automatic startups, particularly with apps they rarely use.

- **Uninstall apps that aren't used.** Device performance also can improve when users uninstall apps they don't use. New computers come with a variety of programs that are pre-installed. These programs take up space and memory and adversely affect performance, which makes them prime tar-

gets for removal.

- **Save files to cloud storage and/or a backup hard drive.** Inadequate storage space on a hard drive also affects device performance in a negative way. Users with lots of files, be it documents or photos or both, on their computers are urged to utilize cloud storage and delete those files once they're successfully uploaded. Files that users prefer to keep on their computer hard drives can be compressed to free up memory and thus improve speed and performance.
- **Utilize the cleanup function on the computer.** A cleanup function can help to improve performance by deleting temporary files that are created whenever a computer is rebooted or an application



First National Bank of McIntosh will be closed on Wednesday, January 1st in observance of New Year's Day.

We Wish You A Happy New Year

In the spirit of the season, we thank all of you for your business, loyalty and friendship.

We look forward to serving you in the years to come. Warmest wishes to you and your family and Happy New Year!



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Dragging your feet on REAL ID? Now is the time to apply

If you've been putting off getting your REAL ID, don't. After May 7, 2025, if you want to get on a plane or enter some federal buildings, you won't be able to use a standard driver's license.

You'll need a REAL ID or a current federal passport.

Gathering your required documents might be easier than you think. Besides knowing your Social Security number, you only really need documents that most people have readily available in their homes. You can find a complete list on our REAL ID page (<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/>).

A few important notes:

- Copies don't count: DVS can't accept photocopies, laminated documents or scanned, faxed or digital images. However, if your utility bills are all online, you can print out a bill and use it as proof of residence.
- Names matter: The name on the documents must match the name on your application. If not, you'll need additional documentation.

If you're concerned about having the right documentation, you can pre-apply online and upload your documents

in advance, which will ensure they meet the requirements at <https://onlineservices.dps.mn.gov/>

Quilters for E. Polk

The Quilters for East Polk County Veterans will be meeting on Tuesday January 7, 2025 at 2:00 pm at the McIntosh Community Center. We will be cutting out fabric for kits. These kits can then be taken home and sewed. Please consider helping us with this very rewarding project. Any questions call Denise Disrud 128-280-0597 or Lois Boehrnsen 218-280-3574



Thank you to Wild Rice Electric and Garden Valley Technologies for your generous donations. Thank you for giving back to your communities. Grace Community Food Shelf.

M42C

SLETTEN TOWNSHIP

Sletten Township has two offices open. Affidavits of candidacy may be filed with the clerk at the Town Clerk's home until Jan. 14, 2025. Offices open are:

- One supervisor - 3 year term**
- One treasurer - 2 year term**

Terri Kaupang
Town Clerk

M42C



Wed. Jan. 1: Katie Strom

Sat. Jan. 4: Amanda Shultz, Henry Rominski

Sun, Jan. 5: Daros Zahn, Sandy Salvhus, Corey Smeby, Mathea Jore

Mon. Jan 6: Winston Carlson

Tues. Jan. 7: Paul Jore, Leland Vigoren

McINTOSH Times

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CHURCH DIRECTORY

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Fosston
Fr. John Suvakeen, Pastor

Wed. Jan. 1: 8:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley
Sun. Jan. 5: 8:00am Confession at St. Mary's, Fosston; 8:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley

OURS SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

McIntosh
Pastor Rene Mehlberg
Synodical Authorized
Rachel Roggenbuck, SAM

Sun. Jan. 5: 10:00am Coffee Hour; 10:30am Worship Services

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, McIntosh will run church services on Channel 30 on Garden Valley Channel 30. They will also be available on YouTube on channel One in Spirit - The Journey. Our Saviors service will be available by 8:30 am each Sunday until further notice.

MCINTOSH FREE LUTHERAN AFLC

McIntosh Trinity / Mount Carmel:
Pastor: Jerry Moan

Trinity: (27262 315th St. SE, McIntosh) Sunday Worship: 9:30am; 10:45am Sunday School
Mt. Carmel: (305 State St. NE, McIntosh) 9:45am Sunday School; Sunday Worship: 11:00am
Wednesdays: 6:30pm Confirmation; 7:15pm Free Lutheran Youth meets at Pastor Moan's home

GOSEN LUTHERAN CHURCH Independent

Gary Johnson, Pastor
www.gosen-church.com
Face Book: Gosen Church

Fri. Jan. 3: 10:00am Telecast of the Sunday School/ Luther League Christmas Program on GVTV--30
Sun, Jan. 5: 9:30am Sunday School and Adult Bible Study; 11:00am Worship Service (also on Facebook and gosenchurch.com); 7:00pm Luther League/ Sunday School Christmas Program (see article elsewhere in the paper)
Tues, Jan. 7: 10:00am. Sunday worship service telecast on GVTV--30
Wed, Jan. 8: 6:30pm Bible Study at Connie Parr's
Gosen Church is located 4 miles south of the junctions of Highways 2 & 59 or 4 miles north of Winger; then 1/2 mile east on County Road 206. For information call 268-4242 or 687-3461.

VERNES LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMC)

McIntosh
PastorLee Laaveg

Sun. Jan. 5: 9:00am Worship

IMMANUEL Lutheran CHURCH

McIntosh
Pastor Bruce Blocker

Sundays: 9:00am Worship; 10:00am Fellowship Hour; 10:15am Sunday School

DOVRE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Winger, MN

Sundays: 9:00am Adult and Children's Sunday School; 10:00am Worship Service
Wednesdays: 7:00pm Bible Study

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Winger

Sundays: 10:30am Coffee Fellowship; 11:00am Worship

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH- NALC

Erskine
Rev. Pam Thorson

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

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Erskine, MN

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The County Line
By Warren Strandell
Polk County Commissioner, Dist. 2

With their budgets finalized and approved, local governments are about to enter the new year. So, do you ever wonder about where your property tax dollars go in, just what they are used for? On that subject, I'll try to tell you a few things — in as a simple way as I can — about how Polk County will use the property tax money that it collects in 2025.

This is only about how Polk County will use the property tax dollars it collects. The cities, school districts, townships, watershed districts, or other units of government/services have their own budgets.

First, Polk County spending for the 2025 is budgeted to total \$73.4 million. That number includes an increase of \$987,000 or 3.865 percent over 2024.

Of that \$73.4 million total, Polk County property taxpayers will contribute \$28.3 million. After also using \$4.56 million from reserves and available fund balances, the remaining balance of about \$40 million — needed to come up with the \$73.4 million total — will come from state and federal sources.

The state portion of this amount includes about \$2 million in County Program Aid. This Program Aid amount includes an increase of \$114,000 over 2024.

Reduction from "Preliminary"
The 3 percent levy increase amount is a reduction from the 5 percent "preliminary levy" that was adopted in September.

The 2025 budget includes the ability to pay for a 3.5 percent COLA (cost of living adjustment) for employees, plus a \$250 per month increase in the benefits package.

The county has eight organized (unionized) departments. Seven of the departments have newly approved three-year wage and benefits contracts. These contracts were negotiated over the past six months. If not approved already, some relatively minor issues remain to be settled in the final contract.

By percentage, the eight different "expense areas" (the different departments) in 2024 were: Social Services, 28%; Road and Bridge, 25%; General Fund, 18%; Public Safety, 10%; Tri-County Community Corrections, 9%; Public Health, 6%; Debt Service, 3%; Planning & Zoning, 1%; Library, less than 1%.

Other notes about county finances that might be of interest:

- \$20.7 million was budgeted for Social Service expenses in Polk County in 2024. Expected revenue for social services from the State of Minnesota in 2025 will total \$14.5 million. These numbers help to show that about 40% of some salaries for social service employees is paid by the State of Minnesota.

- Tax levy increases — beginning in 2009 to the current 3% levy amount set for 2025 — have averaged 2.89% over the past 16 years. The lowest increase of 1.324% came in 2010. The highest increase of 3.053% came in 2023. Most of the "preliminary" increase amounts, which are set in September have been at about 5%. A 3% rate increase coincides closely to the rate of inflation.

- Two years of debt service remain to be paid to satisfy the \$17.5 million in bonds issued in 2005 to construct the 200-bed jail portion of the \$25.5 million Polk County Justice Center.

- The "non-jail" portion cost of the Justice Center — about \$8 million — was paid for up front in cash. The non-jail portion of the Justice Center building includes space for the District Courtrooms and Court Administration, the Polk County Attorney's Office, Polk County Public Health Department, and the administrative offices and Probation Department of Tri-County Community Corrections.

- The "next to last" Justice Center bond re-payment —about \$1.1 million — will be made in February 2025. The final payment is to be made in February 2026.

- The Polk County budgeting process begins in mid-summer when Administrator Chuck Whiting and the County Personnel Committee (commissioners Gary Willhite and Joan Lee) start discussions with the employee group bargaining members.

- The County Board set the "preliminary levy" increase percentage at 5% in September... it's an increase because budgets never go down. The "final levy" of 3% was set in December.

- Minnesota has a 6.875% state sales tax rate that is the major part of the tax rate collected at the time of purchase. The average sales tax rate in Minnesota is 8.04%. Just

thought you would like to know this so that local governments don't get all the blame for the total amount of sales tax.

Thoughts for the day:
• Politicians are the same all over: They promise to build a bridge even when there is no river. — Nikita Khrushchev
• I've found that prayers work best when you have big players. — Knute Rockne, Notre Dame.
• Happy NewYear everyone!

Disclaimer: Thoughts expressed in this column are those of the author and are not necessarily a reflection of the opinions of the other members of the Polk County Board.

MN stabilizes Medicaid for children up to age 6

Eligible Minnesota children will soon have steady access to Medicaid health insurance until they turn 6.

The new policy as of January 1st will support a healthier, more equitable start for the youngest state residents. All children under age 6 who qualify for Medical Assistance will have up to 72 months of uninterrupted coverage. Medical Assistance is Minnesota's Medicaid program.

Signed into law by Governor Tim Walz in 2023, continuous eligibility for kids prevents gaps in necessary care and promotes health equity.

"We know that consistent access to health care and regular check-ups improve children's health outcomes, support school readiness and advance health equity," said Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead. "This new policy takes a big step toward those goals."

Another change gives qualifying 19- and 20-year-olds ongoing Medical Assistance eligibility for 12 months at a time.

Minnesota has significant racial health disparities, with Black and Hispanic children more likely to experience gaps in health care coverage. Data shows that these groups are at greater risk of losing their health insurance because of paperwork and administrative barriers. The new law makes it easier for kids to stay covered.

For children under 6 who qualify for Medical Assistance, the new law extends their eligibility until the last day of the month of their 6th birthday.

The law's initial phase took effect in January 2024. It allows children ages 6 to 19 who qualify for Medical Assistance to remain eligible for 12 months at a time.

People who have Medical Assistance have to renew their insurance each year. To keep their health insurance, enrollees are urged to update their contact information and watch their mail for important renewal paperwork. For more information about Medical Assistance renewals, visit mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage.

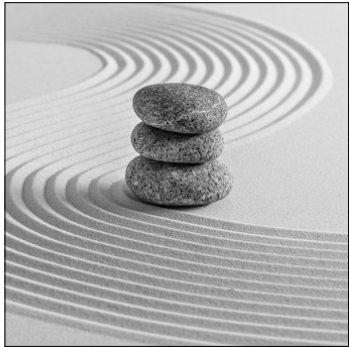
How deep breathing exercises can help alleviate stress

Stress is a normal part of life that is not always as bad as it may seem. For example, a 2013 study from researchers at the University of California, Berkeley found that acute stress caused stems in the brains of rats to proliferate into new nerve cells that ultimately improved the animals' mental performance. That led researchers to conclude that intermittent stressful events can improve alertness, which in turn can help individuals perform better.

When noting the potentially positive effects of stress, it's important to note that those rewards are only reaped when stress is acute. VeryWellMind notes acute stress is commonly experienced a few times each day in the face of an immediate threat. Prolonged stress, often referred to as chronic stress, is dangerous, as it can contribute to conditions like high blood pressure that increase individuals' risk for cardiovascular disease and stroke. Combating chronic stress may require lifestyle changes and the adoption of additional strategies, including breathing techniques.

Skeptics may question the efficacy of breathing as a means to combatting stress. However, the National Council for Mental Wellbeing notes that studies have determined breathing exercises can help to alleviate stress by tricking the brain into thinking a person is in a different emotional state than he or she is actually in. When a person is confronting a stressful situation, breathing speeds up and becomes irregular and shallow. Breathing exercises help people slow down their breathing, thus tricking the brain into thinking a person is in a calm state where no threat is perceived.

Deep breathing exercises can help people confront stressful situations, and WebMD offers a guideline people can look to as they seek to calm their nerves.



Deep breathing
WebMD notes that short, shallow breaths into the chest are common but can contribute to feelings of anxiety and fatigue. Deep breathing techniques are designed to teach people how to take bigger breaths. A deep breathing exercise can begin after a person finds a comfortable position and then breathes in through the nose and lets the belly fill with air. Then breathe out through the nose before placing one hand on the belly and the other on the chest. Feel the belly rise as you breathe in and then feel it lower as you breathe out. Take three additional full, deep breaths.

Focus can help make a deep breathing exercise more effective. WebMD recommends using a picture in your mind and a word or phrase to help relax you. Close the eyes before taking a handful of big, deep breaths. When breathing in, imagine the air is filled with a sense of peace and calm. When breathing out, imagine stress is leaving with that exhaled air. A word or phrase can be utilized when breathing in and out to reinforce these feelings. WebMD recommends continuing these exercises for 10 to 20 minutes.

Wellness involves various strategies designed to promote better overall health, and such approaches include ways to combat stress. Deep breathing exercises are a simple and accessible means to navigating stressful situations.



Alice Rossberd came to McIntosh to visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus on Saturday, December 7th for the holiday celebration, A Very Merry McIntosh brought the jolly man to town along with many other fun events.



Amarah Timmerman.



Jace and Decker Weiss.



Lucas Hornbuckle.



D.J. Sharp.



Willow Finseth.



The Plante Family: Nick, Clarissa, Autumn, Asher and Adalyn.



There were many kids, including Aubry Gunufson (pictured above) came to see Santa and Mrs. Claus during A Very Merry McIntosh on Saturday, December 7th.



Gracie Oertwich and Hayden Rock.



Charlie Thompson with her dad, Matt.



Charlie Blaise Hagen visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus on Saturday, December 7th in McIntosh. The couple came to visit with the kids from the community and to take part in A Very Merry McIntosh celebration which included a visit with Santa, a cardboard sled race, a parade, hay rides, and many other activities up and down the Main street in McIntosh.



Tegen, Morgan, Payton, Thielan, and Lily Brtek.