



BALKAN TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

Winter 2020

This Year:

Break a bad habit
Learn a new skill
Do a good deed
Visit a new place
Read a difficult book
Write something important
Try a new food
Do something good for someone who can not thank you
Take an important risk

Thank you, Election Judges!

Thank you all for your hard work and unsung bravery in defending democracy by doing your part to ensure accuracy in our elections. The November 3rd, 2020 election was very important to all Americans. Our election judges put aside their political preferences to make sure everyone who came to vote in-person could make an unbiased decision to who our new leaders will be.

There was extra work put into the election, for example, extra cleaning to prevent the spread of COVID or the new layout of the polling place to social distance or extra rules like wearing masks and requiring all people to do so or vote by curbside. These election judges made the best of the situation.

At the Balkan polling place, we had a 96% turnout for in-person voting! There were 422 people that voted in-person out of a total of 441 votes *available* to cast in-person. Balkan's absentee votes were counted and collected by St Louis County. Thanks, Balkan, for getting out to vote!

Thanks again, election judges for your hard work and dedication in putting on an accurate, safe and unbiased election!

Also, a big thank you to Iona Lutt from Black Bear Bakery for the goodies she sent to the election judges. Very Kind.

“As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.” – Bill Gates

Balkan Township Election and Annual Meeting - March 9th, 2021

The annual town meeting in March is where *you, the Balkan resident*, decide what happens with your township. It is important to the grassroots form of town government that residents participate. In fact, this is the only form of government that the people are able to decide on what happens at the local level.



The residents participate by first voting for the officials that are up for election, then when the votes have been tallied, the winners of the election are announced at the annual meeting that follows the township election. The clerk opens the meeting. A moderator is chosen by the residents of Balkan to run the meeting. The supervisors can participate as residents or provide information to residents during this meeting.

The Board of Audit report must be read at the meeting, a Road Report must be provided, and any other report of interest the townspeople would like to see (canister site report, fire/ambulance report, community center report). The principal reason for the annual town meeting is to set the levy amount for the next year. The town levy is the tax that residents pay for township services like taking care of the roads and bridges, the community center, the canister site and the garage.

Balkan has two officials up for re-election: Supervisor, a three-year term, and Treasurer, a two-year term. Filing for candidacy opens up on December 29th, 2020 and lasts to January 12th, 2021. Balkan residents can file any time during this period, the office will be open Monday through Friday 9 am – 3pm and for filing on the last day, January 12th from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Filing can be done at the Balkan office at 5524 HWY 73, Chisholm. The cost for filing is \$2.00. If you would like more information please email balkantown@gmail.com or call the office at 218-254-3967.

Balkan gave Chisholm Food Shelf a \$5000 donation from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to keep the money local.

Balkan Township received \$20,725 on July 29th, 2020 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund offered to help government entities with COVID related expenses that were not budgeted for by March 27th, 2020 through November 15th, 2020. There were three factors used in determining if money was being spent correctly on Coronavirus expenses.

- The expense was a necessary expenditure in response to the public health emergency
- The expenses weren't budgeted for by March 27th, 2020.
- The expenses were in the covered period of March 27th through November 15th, 2020.

Knowing Balkan had excess funds that would have to be “returned” to St Louis County, the board of supervisors voted to send the Chisholm Food Shelf a donation of \$5000, in order to keep the money local. Balkan residents are encouraged to use the Chisholm Food Shelf in times of need.

“I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.” ~ Stephen Covey

New flag at the Balkan Community Center

There's a new flag flying at the Balkan Community Center that was donated by Joleen Hendrickson in June 2020. The previous flag was retired and given to Kent Fredeen to bring to the American Legion to properly dispose of. Once per year, the local troop of American Legion's members hold a ceremony to burn damaged and previously decommissioned flags. Traditionally, the American Legion will hold its flag burning ceremony on June 14th, Flag Day.

Snowplowing Reminders

We have all seen a little snow this year. Gladly, most of it melted by now. However, we are almost guaranteed to get more, that will stick to the ground. When we get more snow, the snowplows that clear the roads for Balkan residents will need at least 43 inches of clearance under your mailbox. Please take a few minutes to check the height of your mailbox to ensure it is higher than 43-48 inches. The Balkan snowplow operators and mailman will thank you by clearing your snow and by delivering your mail, unimpeded.

The Balkan Bazaar

It's time to start thinking of Christmas once December rolls around. The Balkan Bazaar was scheduled for December 5th, however, due to the pandemic and the newest governor's order in late November, Balkan's Bazaar has been cancelled, however, it's never too late to start planning for next year.

Committee members are needed to plan community events for 2021.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, many community events have been cancelled in 2020, in order to keep people safe from catching the contagious disease. The Balkan Board of Supervisors invite you to join us for some planning of outdoor activities. We are asking for a few volunteers. We have to *plan* on how to keep people safe while doing our community activities. This will take a committee to put together. If you would like to volunteer for putting together some activities, please call, email or write us a note. We have many ideas that have been gathering all 2020.

AED testing and hands-on demonstrations

An Automated External Defibrillator machine was donated to the Balkan Community Center a few years ago. It "is used to help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. It's a sophisticated, yet easy-to-use, medical device that can analyze the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, deliver an electrical shock, or defibrillation, to help the heart re-establish an effective rhythm.", according to the Red Cross's website.

Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death in America. The average time for medical help to arrive is about 8-12 minutes after 911 is called. For every minute that passes, a person experiencing a cardiac episode, the chance of dying is increased 10% per minute. An AED can make a big difference to that person's chances of survival. If you would like to learn more about being trained and certified to use an AED machine, contact the Red Cross. They have multiple options for training on the AED machine. It may be your turn to be a hero, with the right training and tools.

The Mobile Library

The Bookmobile is offered to many northern Minnesota areas by the Arrowhead Library System. Adult and children's books, Large print books, DVDs and Blu-rays, music CD's, video games and other materials can be checked out from the Bookmobile. The borrowed items are checked out for three weeks and are due back to the Bookmobile the next date it stops at your location. You must use your Arrowhead Library System Borrowers card to rent books and materials from the Bookmobile. If you would like to find out more about the Bookmobile's availability and services, please call the Arrowhead Library System in Mountain Iron at 218-741-3840, 1-800-257-1442 or check them out on-line at www.alslib.info or bookmobile@alslib.info.

Mobile awareness of exposure to COVID-19

Governor Walz recently put out a new application (app) to download to our phones to help contact trace exposure to the Coronavirus. The new COVIDawareMN app is available to all Minnesotans for free. The more people who download this app to their phones, the better it works to find exposure to the virus.

How it works: The app uses Blue Tooth Low Energy technology on your phone to trace exposure. Your phone is constantly running background apps and has the capability to communicate and remember other people's phones. Once you download and "opt-in" to the notification system, the app creates a random "key" that identifies your phone. No one's personal information is transmitted during this process. The app changes your "key" every 10-20 minutes to ensure your privacy. The app downloads "keys" for positive cases of COVID daily and checks them for exposure to you in the last 14 days. The app will notify you if you have been exposed and give you guidance on what next steps to take.

If you would like more information about the mobile awareness app, please visit covidawaremn.org/#howitworks or call the Minnesota Department of Health Helpline at 1-800-657-1304.

Septic repair and replacement loans and grants available

Grants: In cooperation with Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), St. Louis County has grants available for low-to-moderate income home owners with septic systems that are noncompliant or imminent threat to public health and/or safety. These forgivable loans are no interest, no payment loans that are forgiven after 5 years of ownership.

Loans: Low interest loans are available to assist St. Louis County property owners with financing site evaluation, design, installation, repair and replacement of individual sewage treatment

For more information and an application, please contact AEOA at 1-800-662-5711.

Contact St Louis County about any on-site wastewater

Planning and Community Development

If you have any questions about On-Site Wastewater, please contact:

Duluth Office: (218) 725-5200

Virginia Office: (218) 749-0625

Email: oswinfo@stlouiscountymn.gov

“If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.”

– Booker T. Washington

A special Thank You to Garth and Sandra Wilson on Baich Road for offering some fun to the kids in the neighborhood with the ride on the hay wagon for Halloween. Thank you for making Halloween special for those kids!

BALKAN TOWNSHIP

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