

Lake Country Lure

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ANNANDALE
Advocate

The Maple Lake
MESSENGER

Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce is good for community, good for business

By Brenda Erdahl

The goal of the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce is to improve the vitality of the community and make Maple Lake a great place to live and do business.

It does this by building relationships among the businesses then working together to promote the community with some really fun events.

Although not overly big with only 78 members, the Chamber is responsible for the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Gear-Head Get Together that brings thousands of people to town every year. The Chamber also hosts Christmas in Maple Lake, the Business Trick or Treat and other seasonal activities and occasions.

In 2022 the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce will welcome a new president, Nick Pawlenty, and as president his goal is to build the chamber by reaching out to businesses and finding out what their needs and wants are.

"I want to be proactive in reaching out to businesses, whether they are members or not. I'll strive to communicate with our businesses and build relationships. I want to make it easy for every business to get involved and stay involved because being a member of the Chamber is a great way to stay connected," he said.

Being a member of the Chamber of Commerce gives business owners and individuals the opportunity to come together monthly to inform one another of events, updates or happenings going on in their businesses. It's at these meetings that they can plan and talk about opportunities available through numerous community events. Being involved with this group of individuals affords a company the opportunity to meet with other business owners and involved community members to form long-lasting relationships. It is a terrific networking mechanism.

In addition to Pawlenty, the Chamber of Commerce will welcome a new vice president and secretary in 2022. Maple Lake



The Irish Washer Women are always a big hit at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. This Chamber event brings thousands of people to town every year.

School's Superintendent Mike Rowe will serve as vice president and Caleb Haag of Lake Central as secretary.

In addition to networking, being a member of the chamber offers great ways for businesses to increase their exposure. The names of all member businesses are published in the chamber's resident newcomer packet that is distributed to new residents of the area through channels including the school district, Star Bank and The City. Member businesses are also listed in chamber newspaper ads and can have their business website linked to the chamber website. The chamber has a Facebook page for members to keep up to date with happenings in town and to share their promotions or events and they get discounted pricing on the use of the chamber's Highway 55 finger board messaging signs positioned on both ends of town.

The Chamber has also launched a new website that will make it easier to disseminate information to member businesses and the community as a whole. With the new website, member businesses will also have the convenience of paying their dues online.

Besides being president, Pawlenty is the news/layout editor at the Maple Lake Messenger and organizes the St. Patrick's Day Grand Day Parade. Thousands of people turn out annually for this 45-year-old festival in March that features the 5K Irish Scamper, craft fair and Grand Day Parade.

Gear-Head Get Together is another event that brings thousands of people to town. A "car show and much, much more," it attracts more than 1,000 cars and 150 motorcycles for a display that takes over much of the town. The event also features live music, food stands and a swap meet. The chamber also organizes a fall craft fair in November, an all-city garage sale in June, Business Trick-or-Treat in October, and Christmas in Maple Lake in December. In February, the Maple Lake Ice Fishing Derby takes place, which the chamber doesn't put on itself, but supports.

Last year the pandemic put a hold on or changed some of the Chambers most favored events, but Pawlenty is optimistic that 2022 will be fully back to normal and if it isn't, they will do their best to bring these beloved activities to the community in the safest way possible.

If there is one thing COVID has taught us, it's

Commodore are honored.

The other way the chamber makes money is by its membership fees which Pawlenty said is one of the lowest of any chamber in the county. Because of all the benefits the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce can offer, it has become home to a broad spectrum of members, from large industrial corporations to small, downtown bookstores.

The chamber also has several members that are not businesses, including the City of Maple Lake, Maple Lake School District, Bethlehem United Church of Christ, and the Church of St. Timothy.

All work together to make Maple Lake a better place for its residents and its businesses.

Businesses and organizations can join the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce anytime throughout the year. Contact Pawlenty at 963-3813 or nick@maplelakemessenger.com for more information.

"We hope to see a lot of new faces this year and a lot of familiar faces as well," he said.



Chamber businesses work together to provide a safe Halloween experience for the community's youth at the Business Trick or Treat.



The Gear-Head Get Together is another Chamber event that brings a lot of people to town. It always takes place the third Saturday in August.

Photos from the Messenger archives



The Chamber's Christmas in Maple Lake was held outdoors this year and featured Santa Claus and his reindeer.

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Resisting the urge to

Plop & Drop

By Jerry Carlson

I had a dozen holes scattered over the top of a loosely clustered school of crappies. As they moved and wandered, my five gallon bucket and I did, too. It wasn't fast and furious action, but for midday angling, it was certainly acceptable.

Somewhere along the line, I saw company coming. The deep basin I was fishing was not a secret crappie spot. Soon, a truck pulled up a short distance away from me and several young anglers emptied out.

I was curious to see what their strategy was going to be. While one person fiddled with pulling gear out of the back of the truck, the other two began searching for fish.

They drilled a lot of holes in the process of locating some suspended crappies, but eventually found what they wanted and set up a large portable house. It didn't take long before I heard some whooping and hollering and knew they were catching fish.

It was a half hour later when another vehicle pulled up to the basin. In contrast to the first group, they never bothered to look for fish. This couple drilled four holes, set up their portable and began fishing. Not surprisingly, there was no celebratory commotion that came from this fish house. This couple had fallen into the "plop and drop" trap.

The "plop and drop" is a term I use to describe situations where people don't take the time to search for fish before setting up camp. They pick a spot, plop down on the ice and drop a jig in hopes of something being in their location. It is a dangerous habit to fall into.

This is especially true for those that are fishing during the daylight hours. Once evening rolls around, plop and drop anglers may have a better chance at deep basin crappies as they tend to move around more in the low light period.

If there is one fact I constantly share with panfish anglers, it is the need to find fish before you begin fishing. I understand that sometimes a person can wait them out to some degree. However, you absolutely cannot catch fish that aren't there.

If conditions are right, I do utilize the system of pouring water on the ice and then shooting a reading through the ice by placing the transducer in the puddle of water. This is a simple but effective procedure. Too much snow or rough ice makes this process trickier.

Preparing to catch fish during the winter season can make or break a good day out. Making plans and registering fish before you drop your line is very important to not waste a day. Make sure you bring the right equipment and don't pick the first place you see and start fishing.

Photo courtesy of Jerry Carlson



DNR certifies new state record for muskie

Contributed report

An angler caught a muskellunge weighing 55 pounds, 14 ounces, from Mille Lacs Lake that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has certified as a weight-based state record. The previous record was a 54-pound muskie caught from Lake Winnibigoshish in 1957. Although news of the fish has spread quickly in the news and social media, a record is not official until the certification process is complete.

Nolan Sprengeler caught the muskie on Nov. 22, with friends Kevin Kray and Zack Skoglund. Their plan was to fish the afternoon until after moonrise, which was about 8 p.m. After some delay due to low water and frozen water at accesses, they eventually broke some ice to get Sprengeler's boat in the water after sunset.

"On our last spot of the evening at about 9 p.m., I felt a tap on the end of my line. I fought the fish to the boat and Kevin Kray netted it for me. The fish measured 57.75 inches by 29 inches," Sprengeler said. "After trying to revive the fish for about an hour we realized she wasn't going to make it. We made the decision to bring the fish in to get weighed on a certified scale."

Sprengeler brought the fish to be weighed on a certified scale with witnesses the next morning, had it identified at a DNR Fisheries office, and then dropped off his catch with a taxidermist.

The DNR announces new state records in news releases, on social media and on the DNR website. Find current records and guidelines for each type of state record at mndnr.gov/record-fish.



Nolan Sprengeler caught this record-breaking, 55 pound, 14-ounce muskie on Nov. 22 on Mille Lacs Lake with friends Kevin Kray and Zack Skoglund. Photo submitted

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LAKE OF THE MONTH

Howard Lake

Catch bass, panfish and pike



Located closely to the town of Howard Lake, the 717-acre lake boasts great fishing, with the more popular fishing being panfish and pike, and best known for its largemouth bass population.

By Joe Stewig
Area Fisheries Manager

Howard Lake: Howard Lake is a 717-acre lake located near the city of Howard Lake in Wright County. The lake is highly developed and has three (3) public access on the lake. As with many lakes in the area, Howard Lake offers fishing opportunities for a variety of species and while the lake is stocked with walleye, it is probably better known as a bass/panfish/northern pike lake.

The lake has a history of fish stocking dating back to 1911; however, systematic walleye stocking didn't begin until 1974 and consisted of fingerling stocking every two (2) to three (3) years up until 1990. Since then, a mixture of fingerlings, yearlings and adults have been stocked every other year most recently in 2019. The Howard Lake Watershed Alliance also augments the walleye population by periodically stocking during even numbered years (when DNR doesn't). The most recent lake survey was conducted in 2019 and found average numbers of walleye (3.2/gill net) for the lake class, but below average numbers for the lake. Walleye caught ranged in length from 14 to 27 inches and averaged 19 inches and about 2 1/2 pounds. Growth is average for the area taking three (3) years to reach 15 inches.

While the lake is stocked with walleye, Howard Lake is probably best known for its largemouth bass fishery and there are plenty of bass to be had. In 2019, we sampled 217 largemouth bass ranging in length from five (5) to 20 inches with an average length and weight of 13 1/2 inches and 1 1/2 pounds. Fifty percent of the bass sampled were longer than 12 inches and 34% were longer than 15 inches. Anglers can expect some good bass action on this lake.

Black Crappie are another sought after species in the lake and at times can provide excellent fishing. Based on the summer assessment, abundance appears to be on an upswing with the gill net catch rate well above what we would expect to see for similar lakes however, the average size was small. Summer assessments tend to not give a true representation of the actual size structure of the crappie population and so a targeted spring assessment would better represent the true size structure of the crappie population. That said, crappies sampled in 2019 ranged in length from 4.1 – 12.4 inches with an average length of 5.7 inches. Only 6% of the crappies sampled were longer than eight (8) inches and 4% were longer than 10 inches. There was a huge number of crappies between 4 1/2 and six (6) inches sampled in 2019 and so there should be some nice crappies to be had out there as this year class recruits to the fishery in the coming years.

Bluegill abundance has been below average for the lake class since 2006 and the size structure appears to be relatively poor. Those sampled in 2019 ranged in length from three (3) to 7 1/2 inches with an average length of four (4) inches. Only 4% of the bluegill sampled were longer than six (6) inches and none were longer than eight (8) inches. Like crappies, the size structure of the bluegill population is better represented through spring targeted sampling. In 2014, a targeted survey was conducted and sampled 286 bluegills that ranged in length from three (3) to nine (9) inches and averaged 6.8 inches. Eighty-one percent of the bluegill sampled were longer than six (6) inches and 16% were longer than eight (8) inches. Bluegill growth is slow, taking six (6) years to reach seven (7) inches. Even



This map from the Minnesota DNR shows an aerial view and depths of Howard Lake. Photos submitted

though the summer survey doesn't paint a pretty picture as far as the size structure goes, anglers can still scratch out a good meal of sunfish if they are willing to sort.

Northern pike abundance is average for the lake class, but the average size is excellent. Pike sampled ranged in length from 18 – 35 inches and averaged 24 1/2 inches and 3 1/4 pounds. Anglers should have a good opportunity to catch some quality size pike as 27% of the catch were 26 inches or longer and 4% were 30 inches or longer. Growth of northern pike is average for the area, taking six (6) years to reach 25 inches. Although pike are not over abundant in the lake, anglers are encouraged to take advantage of the new statewide regulations on pike. The new regulations, implemented in 2018, now allow anglers to harvest up to 10 northern pike of which only two (2) can be over 26 inches in lakes within the North-Central Zone (excluding lakes with existing Experimental/Special regulations). All pike between 22 and 26 inches (inclusive) must however be immediately released.

There are no special fishing regulations on Howard Lake; however, the lake is infested with Eurasian milfoil (2004) so care should be taken not to spread this invasive species. Also, practicing selective harvest will continue to ensure healthy fish populations for future enjoyment.

January Fishing Forecast

Anglers find four to eight inches of ice on area lakes

By Brenda Erdahl

Anglers are reporting four to eight inches of ice on area lakes as the winter fishing season begins. According to Kurt Segner at Little Jim's Sport Shop in Annandale that is normal for the weather we are having. Anglers are just starting to walk out on the ice with removable fish houses, no permanent houses have appeared yet on area lakes, Segner said. Panfish and Northern Pike have been biting on Little Maple while Cedar, Sugar, Clearwater, and Pleasant Lakes have produced some walleyes. The walleyes have been biting on shiners or flatheads with jiggling spoons in the late evening and early morning. Segner expects the fishing will pick up in the next 10 or so days with the predicted arrival of arctic weather that will add inches to the ice.



Anglers have just started to get out on the ice, and the fishing should pick up soon. Photo submitted

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Statewide snowmobile season is here

Contributed report

While recent snow in parts of Minnesota has many snowmobile enthusiasts excited to take their first ride of the season, most of the state's trails are not yet groomed and ready to ride, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Riders can expect to find uneven conditions and should check local trail reports before venturing out. Minnesota's snowmobile trails officially open on Dec. 1 each year. Regardless of the date on the calendar, though, several conditions must be met before trails can be groomed:

- The ground must be frozen. Where trails cross wetlands, 15 inches of ice is needed to support the weight of the trail groomers.
- Adequate snow cover, about 12 inches, must be on the ground to allow for trail packing and grooming.
- Trails must be cleared of fallen trees, signs have to be put in place and gates need to be opened. Snowmobile club volunteers and DNR staff are currently working on these tasks.

"It's a big job for local volunteers and DNR staff to get the trail system up and running each year, especially with varying weather conditions," said Paul Purman, state trails and snowmobile program consultant. "Unseasonable thunderstorms in December eroded the snowpack in many areas of the state, setting back our trail preparations. Our 23,000-mile system really needs two things now: more snow on the ground, and more volunteers stepping up to help volunteer clubs get the trails ready and maintained. We're hoping for a banner year for snowmobiling and recognize that local clubs are the backbone of that success."

While snowmobilers wait for grooming to start, now is a good time to make sure registrations are current, confirm that snowmobiles are in good operating order, review safety training, and check local trail maps for route changes or



Besides trails not being groomed, snowmobile season is upon us and with more snow coming in the riding will only get better.

Photo submitted

new trails.

Registrations for new snowmobiles may be purchased in person at any deputy registrar of motor vehicles or at the DNR License Center in St. Paul. Registration renewals and out-of-state trail stickers may be purchased in person or online at mndnr.gov/licenses.

Local trail conditions are often posted online by local tourism associations, chambers of commerce and volunteer snowmobile clubs. Contacts for DNR-funded, locally managed trails can be found at DNR website. State park and trail conditions are posted on the DNR website.

Local snowmobile clubs welcome volunteers to assist with annual trail preparations like removing brush and fallen trees, holding snowmobile safety classes, and stocking trailside shelters with firewood. To find the nearest club, visit the Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association website.

Protect trees and shrubs from deer

Contributed report

In winter, property owners sometimes begin to notice broken branches or branches missing on trees and shrubs. This damage often is a result of deer browsing and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has tips to prevent it.

"Hungry deer will eat plants they can access, and that can cause trees and shrubs to become quite ragged or in some cases even die," said Eric Nelson, DNR wildlife animal damage program supervisor. "Try a few of these tips before deer become a problem—but make sure to first check local ordinances, which may impact some of these practices."

Eliminate food sources

To start, try removing food sources or blocking deer from them. Temporarily stop feeding seed or grain to birds, and clean-up spilled seed. Switch to feeding only suet during this time.

Cover bushes and low woody plants near the house with burlap, plastic snow fence, netting or heavyweight frost protection blankets made of 2.5- to 4-ounce fabric, and shake off snow before it gets heavy enough to damage covered plants. Do not use tarps or clear plastic because they may make some plants more susceptible to sunscald and fungus. Shake the snow off the covering to prevent breaking of branches from a heavy snow load.

To protect young trees, cover the lower areas with tree tubes, wrap or bud caps. Remove tree tubes or wrap in the spring to prevent unwanted pests and disease.

To protect older trees, create a cage that is 6 inches away from the trunk using at least 6-foot high woven or welded wire cages around the tree or shrub 6 inches or more away to stop deer from accessing the tip of the branches. Adjust the cage as the tree grows.

If the space between the wires is larger than 6 inches by 6 inches deer will be able to reach in with their slender mouths so add at least 8 inches of additional space from the tip of the branches if the cage has a grid larger than 6 x 6. In some cases, deer can push on the cages, so cages may need to be staked down with metal or



Protect your yard from roaming deer in the winter.

Photo submitted

wood stakes.

Consider planting trees and shrubs that are less palatable to deer such as nannyberry, ironwood, and white spruce. Additional ideas are available from the University of Minnesota Extension.

Tactics to deter deer

Deer deterrents can work but be aware that

deer become desensitized to disturbances, so property owners may need to vary tactics.

Deterrents include motion-activated floodlights to startle nocturnal deer in rural areas; however, deer may be accustomed to these types of lights in urban areas. Other deterrents include wind chimes, wind socks, shiny polyester tape, flagging, scarecrows, or ornaments

that create both motion and noise to startle deer. Keeping a leashed dog in the area can deter deer. Others have reported success using a radio in combination with lights, activated by a motion-detector for both a sight and auditory deterrent.

There are also many commercial and homemade repellents that can be used for deer, but they typically need to be used when temperatures are above freezing. These also need to be reapplied regularly to discourage deer. See the manufacturer's recommendations for winter effectiveness and application rates.

For more information on living with deer and other wildlife species, visit the DNR website.

MAPLE LAKE Chamber of Commerce

The Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce is a membership of business, educational & organized non-profit member entries.

Do you have a business in the Maple Lake area and are interested in joining the Chamber? We'd love to have you!
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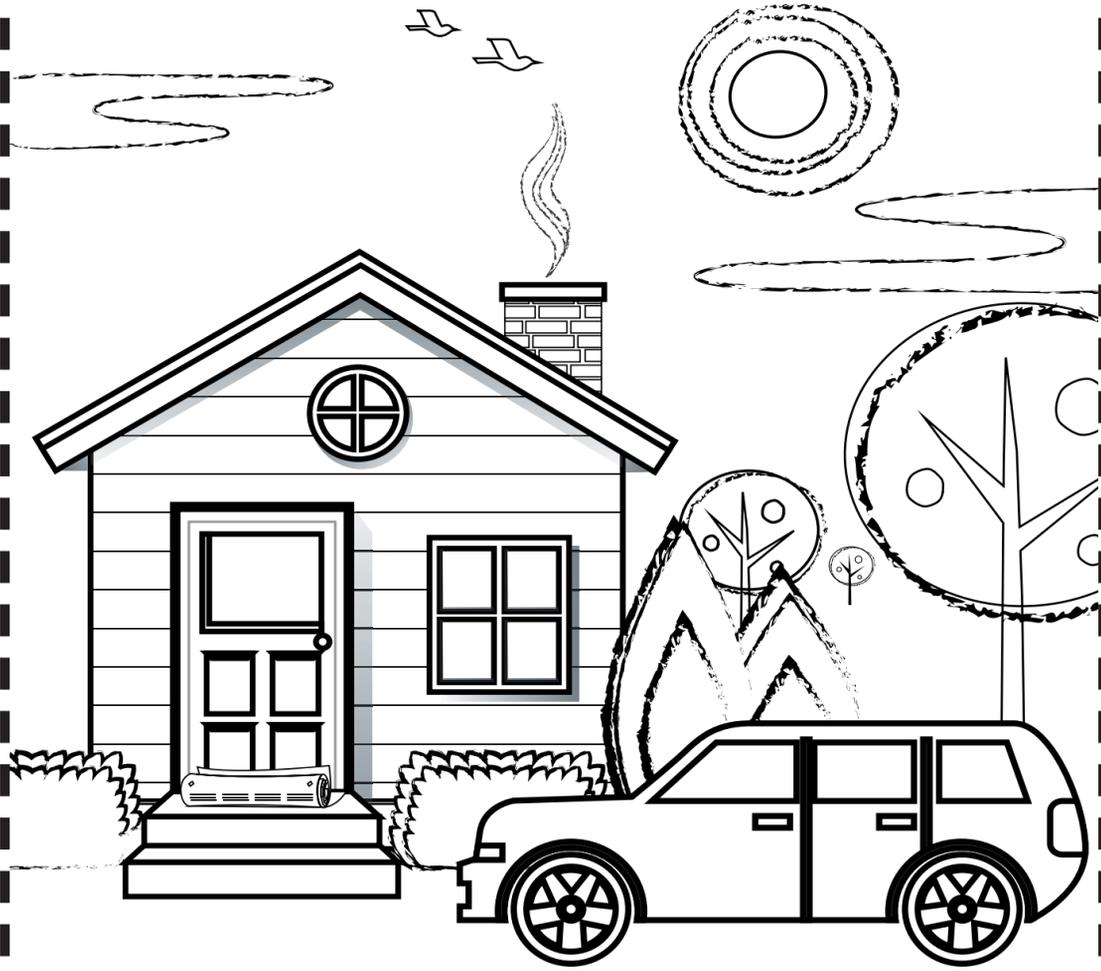
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LAKE Country Calendar

January



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 New Years Day
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
● New Moon Sunrise 7:51 a.m. Sunset 4:43 p.m.		● Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. ● Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. ● South Haven City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., City Hall	● Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce, Noon, location TBD			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Sunrise 7:50 a.m. Sunset 4:50 p.m.	● Maple Lake School Board Meeting, 7 pm ● Annandale City Council Meeting, 6:30 pm	● Late Start Maple Lake Schools ● Chatham Township Meeting, 7 p.m. ● American Legion Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Club ● Maple Lake City Council Meeting, 7 p.m. ● Potluck Supper, Pioneer Park, 6:30 p.m.	● Annandale Chamber Meeting, 11:30 a.m. location TBD ● Hasty-Silver Creek Sportsmen's Club Meeting, 8 p.m.	● Lions Club Meeting, 7 p.m. at The V by HH ● Sons of the American Legion, 8 p.m.		● Take a Kid Ice Fishing Weekend
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
● Take a Kid Ice Fishing Weekend Sunrise 7:46 a.m. Sunset 4:59 p.m.	○ Full Moon ● Take a Kid Ice Fishing Weekend ● Marting Luther King Jr. Day City offices are closed	● Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. ● Albion Township Meeting, 7 p.m. ● Maple Lake Township Meeting, 7 p.m.				● Xx
Sunrise 7:41 a.m. Sunset 5:08 p.m.	23 30 Sunrise 7:34 a.m. Sunset 5:18 p.m.	24 31 ● Annandale School Board Meeting, 7 p.m., AES Media Center ● Annandale Schools Teacher Workshop NO SCHOOL	25 ● Wright County Snowmobile Association Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Club	26	27	28
		● New Moon		● Knights of Columbus Meeting, 7 p.m., Church of St. Timothy		29

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