

THE LAKER

Volume LXXI issue no. 7

July 2025

MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR

CHRIS HEIM, MAYOR

HELLO NEIGHBORS!

It's been an eventful month in Medicine Lake—marked by high water levels, a festive 4th of July boat parade, the retirement of our longtime SEH project manager Dave Hutton, and final touches from VEIT construction—and several spectacular sunsets. It's hard to believe that just one year ago we were navigating dusty roads and heavy construction equipment. Today, the city looks fantastic, the neighborhood feels calm again, and Jevne Park looks amazing with its new pavilion, resurfaced courts, and almost upgraded playground. We have so much to celebrate!

KEY UPDATES

REMINDER—NATIONAL NIGHT OUT (NNO)—AUGUST 5TH, 6-8 PM

National Night Out is one of our favorite events of the year! Join us at Jevne Park on August 5th from 6:00–8:00 PM for a wonderful evening of community, connection, and celebration. We're once again serving \$5 meals from Butcher & Salt and have a very special dedication planned. Mark your calendars – looking forward to seeing everyone.

NEW ADDITION TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT—UTILITY TRUCK

With the installation of fire hydrants throughout our city, the Fire Department no longer requires the Water Tanker Truck. Originally donated to us by the state, the tanker has now been transferred to another department in need. In its place, and thanks to grant funding, MLFD has acquired a used Utility Truck. This versatile, fast-response vehicle will support medical calls, public service duties, and various needs throughout our city. Be sure to check out the new Utility Truck on display at National Night Out!

WE RECEIVED FEDERAL FUNDING FOR OUR PROJECT

I'm thrilled to announce that we have been officially approved to receive \$439,036 in Federal EPA funding for our road, water, and sewer project! This process began a couple of years ago with the strong advocacy of former Representative Dean Phillips and his team. While the funding was briefly lost earlier this year due to federal budget cuts, it has now been fully reinstated and confirmed. This is a significant financial boost for our city and puts us in a strong position as we complete the final payments on this major infrastructure project. Thank you to everyone who helped make this possible!

See you on August 5th at NNO!



IN THIS ISSUE...

Enjoying the regular History articles from our Fire Chief?

Check out **pages 2-4** for all the latest MLFD news.

Wondering about the new boater registration laws and how to they affect your family?

Learn more on **page 5**.

Get all the details about this year's National Night Out event (to be held in Jevne Park)

on **page 5**.

Looking for the latest City Council Votes or monthly Meeting Dates? Go to **page 6**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 1

New Boater Law in effect

August 4

City Council Meeting , 6p

August 5

National Night Out, 6-8p

Hot Flashes FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Over many years, The Laker has intermittently featured notes from the Fire Department. In celebration of our 75th year, we're bringing back its most popular title "Hot Flashes from the Fire Chief"!

2025 MARKS THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEDICINE LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT!

HISTORY

RECORD OF FIRES AT <u>MEDICINE LAKE PARK</u>										MINN. STATE	
DATE	TIME	ALARM	LOCATION	OWNER	OCCUPANT	DETAILS AND CONSTRUCTION	OCCUPANCY	CAUSE OF FIRE	HOW EXTINGUISHED	TYPICAL RISKINESS	OUTSIDE AID
OCT 17 1951	11:50 PM	Box Phone	237 PEN. RD.	SCHEER	HENSEN	1 STORY LOST FRAME		SPONTANEOUS COMB.	How Stomach, Booster Line, Extinguishers, Out on Arrival, Etc.		SHEEP SHED
MAY 17 1950	11:50 PM	Box Phone		SCHEER	HENSEN	1 STORY LOST FRAME		SPONTANEOUS COMB.	How Stomach, Booster Line, Extinguishers, Out on Arrival, Etc.		SHEEP SHED

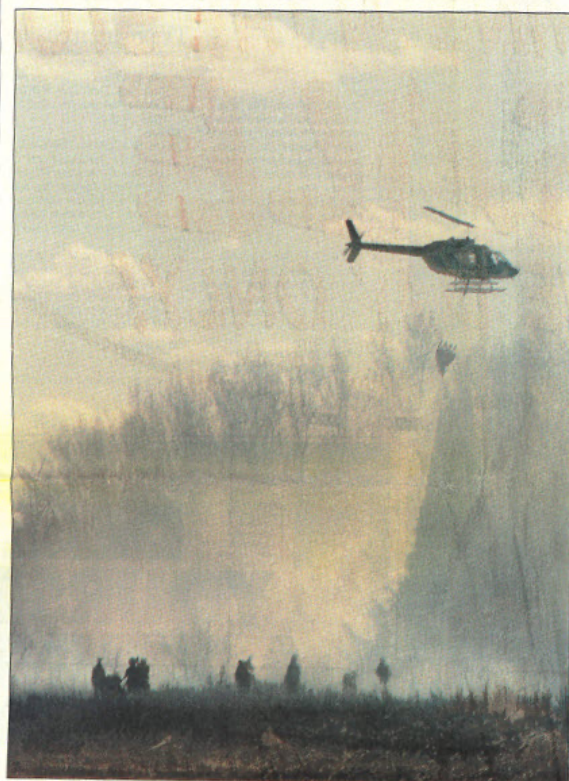
In 75 years even a small jurisdiction is bound to have some notable calls. Whether memorable as a responder or noteworthy to the community they serve. MLFD has had many but for the sake of keeping this from getting too long we'll stick closer to Medicine Lake proper this time

The first written fire response in "Medicine Lake Park" was Oct 17th, 1951 – a garage fire thought to be caused by spontaneous combustion. It's unknown how scientific that investigation was at the time, but far be it from me to judge!

Arguably there may be no fire better known



Medicine Lake blaze darkens the skies



outside of Medicine Lake than that of the Flying Tiger Bar in 1997, which drew mutual aid engines from several neighboring departments, staffed by many firefighters who also happened to be devoted customers. In the years after, while serving on both MLFD and Plymouth FD I heard several stories of... we'll just call it 'camaraderie'...taking place there, including nicknaming it the fourth fire station (when Plymouth had just built their third) and the volunteer firefighters sitting down at a table, setting the fire radio in the middle just in case there was a call....and then deciding who would respond if so! A few years later and not more than a stone's throw away where the marsh around the Luce Line Trail boardwalk now exists there were several brush fires but one in particular enveloped the old creosote ridden train trestle – it was said that you could see the black plume that day from beyond Rogers. Two adults were later charged in connection with starting the blaze and causing at least \$1 Million in damages. It's not surprising why this is one of the more memorable events of the time and which led to the rebuilt steel structure clearly visible from the bike trail today.

H^{OT} FLASHES (continued from page 2)

The lake and the peninsula can also contribute to events that may seem uncommon to other areas. A

Suspect sought in metro-area brush fire; no injuries

By Chris Graves
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Firefighters beat down an intense brush fire in a confined area near the southern shore of Medicine Lake Saturday, while authorities searched for a man believed to have set the blaze.

The fire was reported at 1:26 p.m. along Union Pacific railroad tracks near Colonial Circle, a residential street in the small community of Medicine Lake. Flames lapped close to several homes, but none was damaged. No one was injured. The flames were extinguished about 6½ hours after the fire started.

Hennepin County sheriff's Capt. Bill Chandler said a homeowner reported seeing a teenager or man in his early 20s leaving the area at the same time the homeowner saw flames coming from the train trestle. It took firefighters nearly two hours to control the blaze, which was fueled by extremely dry underbrush and gusty winds.

The suspect was described as a white male with a stocky build



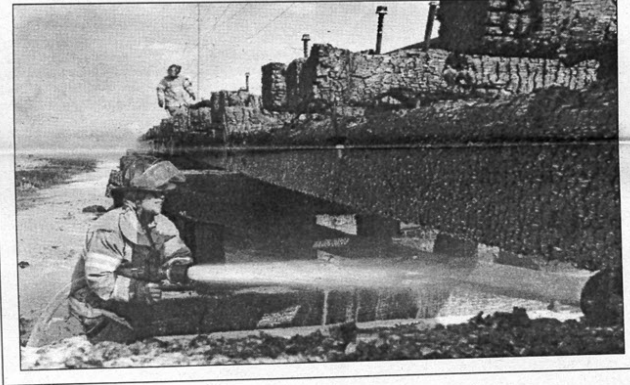
The smoke from a small but intense brush fire could be seen from downtown Minneapolis, background. No buildings were destroyed, although the flames came close to several homes. The fire was out by 8 p.m.

Star Tribune photo by Duane Brakley

Fire damages tracks near Medicine Lake

A fire burned around 25 acres on the south shore of Medicine Lake Saturday, April 8, damaging railroad tracks and a bridge. The fire was so hot it warped the train rails (right). Members of the Maple Grove Fire Department (below) joined firefighters from Plymouth, Medicine Lake and other towns in battling the blaze, managing to keep it from homes in the area. See Page 26A for another photo from the fire.

Photos by
Craig Lassig



good example is not the water itself but the skies above. Besides being on the approach path for

MSP, Medicine Lake has found itself as a landing-pad for aircraft in distress. Accounts do vary, but it is said the same pilot with an "experimental aircraft" crash landed more than once, the first time in the shallows in 1999 which followed a documented history of aircraft ditching in the lake at least as far back as the 1940s



Authorities examined the wreckage of a small experimental plane that crashed near the swimming area on the north shore of Medicine Lake in Plymouth on Wednesday afternoon. About 250 to 300 people were at the beach when the accident occurred. The pilot was the only one injured.

Pilot is critically injured in Medicine Lake crash

By Andrew Tallberg
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Robert Costain was hiking Wednesday near Medicine Lake in Plymouth when he saw a small experimental plane take off from a dock across the lake.

It was a normal ascent, said Costain, who got his pilot's license more than 40 years ago. The man took a normal left turn and a normal right turn. But then, Costain said, the plane became more aggressive. "Those aren't things you do at low altitudes," he said. "I said, 'Oh-oh—this guy's got some control problems.'"

The pilot, estimated to be in his late 50s, disappeared behind trees. But when Costain pedaled to the scene at French Regional Park, the plane's remains were in the water, just feet from a swimming area

and beach where officials said 250 to 300 people were enjoying a warm afternoon.

Witnesses said they heard the plane crash and then children screaming. Only the pilot was injured.

His neck was impaled by a 5-inch piece of metal from the windshield. His rescue, aided by five lifeguards and several rescue agencies, took about an hour.

The man's injuries didn't appear to be life-threatening, said Pat Lija, a North Memorial Medical Center doctor who helped rescue him.

The man was flown to North Memorial in Robbinsdale, where he was in critical condition Wednesday night.

He never lost consciousness but was in a great deal of pain, Lija said.



Lifeguards and emergency workers took about an hour to rescue the pilot, whose neck was impaled on a 5-inch piece of metal. A doctor who helped in the rescue said the man's injuries didn't appear to be life-threatening.

Officials wouldn't identify the pilot, but witnesses said he lived nearby. They said he flew the plane often and usually docked on the west side of Medicine Lake.

The Federal Aviation Adminis-

tration will conduct an investigation that could take months, officials said.

The beach was closed for the day. Officials weren't sure whether it would be reopened today.

One of the most memorable fire department responses

I personally remember was watching out our window in 1988 when a weed harvester, a not uncommon summertime sight back then, caught fire in shallow water just off shore.

1988 was considered a "historic drought", as evidenced by the water level in the picture, and MLFD responded both from shore using our dock and with the boat from the water. It was pretty exciting for this kid to see... (the jury is out on if it had any impact on my signing up 13 years later...)

Hot Flashes (continued from page 3)

Unfortunately, some calls carry more tribulation and I've deliberately avoided those here. For example, the house I grew up in caught fire when it was struck by lightning in August 2007, almost at the exact spot from where the aforementioned photo was taken. Damage was thankfully limited, all things considered, but MLFD and Golden Valley did well to limit the damage that evening to the walls and the roof.

MLFD continues to train and prepare to respond to a wide range of events in and outside of Medicine Lake. Some with loss or damage of property, others with friends and neighbors in distress. The former, current, and future members of the Medicine Lake Fire Department consistently dedicate their time to train to help their neighbors and strangers to keep what might be a regular day from becoming their worst. Perhaps I have emphasized it already, but our volunteers serve us in a way that simply cannot be overstated, a direct correlation to what easily could be the highest percentage of volunteer firefighters from any given population in Minnesota.

EVENTS (Asst. Fire Chief, Mike Fox)

As of 6/30, using exclusively state aid funds (no Medicine Lake money), we added a new vehicle to the MLFD emergency response fleet! We'd like to introduce our new (to us) Fire Utility truck, U11.

This purchase was part of many months of planning triggered by the realization that, once hydrants were installed, we would no longer need our 3850 gallon water tanker, T11, and we would have the chance to repurpose a garage bay at the fire station.



Here are few notable milestones:

- For more than a decade, MLFD has been working hard to improve and extend our Rescue/Service capabilities (lake and land) beyond fire protection.
- In December of 2023, Medicine Lake was awarded \$14,573 from the state of MN as part of a [One-Time Public Safety Aid](#) program. One of the pre-approved uses for these funds was fire equipment.
- In November of 2024, MLFD command staff began detailing the need for a Fire Utility truck to assist in improving Rescue/Service capabilities and initial response times for MLFD.
- In February of 2025, our City Council approved resolution 25-08 and the appropriation of the same \$14,572 (state aid funds) to buy a used Fire Utility truck for MLFD.
- In June, we purchased a 2010 F350 Fire Utility vehicle with 59k miles from Plain Township in New Albany, OH for \$11,611.07. Lieutenant Tom Vierkant volunteered to fly to Ohio and drive U11 741 miles back to Medicine Lake.

U11 is already fully operational and "upfitted" for emergency response (lights and sirens), but there are some marking and configuration expenses we are considering with the leftover state aid funds. U11 will be on display at National Night Out on August 5th--stop by and take a look!

SAFETY (Emergency Management, Brian Malecha)

I hope everyone had a great 4th of July and enjoyed the fireworks displays on the lake. This month's topic is fire safety. July is a peak month for grilling and outdoor gatherings, which make it a top month for accidental fires. Whether you're firing up the grill or enjoying a backyard fire pit, practicing fire safety is essential to protect your home and loved ones.

Always place grills and fire pits at least 10 feet away from buildings, deck railings, and overhanging branches. Never leave them unattended, and keep a water source or fire extinguisher nearby in case of emergencies. Clean your grill after use to get rid of excess grease, check gas lines for leaks, and keep flammable materials like paper plates and lighter fluid away from open flames. For charcoal grills and fire pits, be sure to fully extinguish coals and embers with water before leaving them unattended or disposing of them. Encourage kids and pets to stay a safe distance away from all fire sources. With a few simple precautions, we can all enjoy summer festivities while keeping our community safe from fire hazards

NEW BOATER EDUCATION LAWS

Effective July 1, 2025, a new law requires some adults and youth who operate motorboats—including personal watercraft—to have a valid watercraft operator's permit. People who already have a watercraft operator's permit are not affected by the law, which is designed to make boating safer by ensuring everyone operating a motorized watercraft knows the rules and is properly trained.

Key takeaways:

- **Adult and youth permits:** Young operators and some adults need a valid operator's permit to operate certain motorized watercraft. For adults born after June 30, 2004, the requirement started July 1, 2025. The law will extend to older age groups over time.
- **Youth restrictions:** Young operators can't operate boats with more than 75 horsepower. They can operate boats (that are not PWC) with less than 75 horsepower with an accompanying operator.
- **Gradual rollout:** The law will phase in over the next few years. The operator permit requirement started July 1, 2025 and gradually expands through 2028.

This new law aims to improve safety on the water by making sure everyone operating a motorized watercraft is trained and qualified.

For more info or to register for the watercraft operator's permit course:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/education.html>.

WAKE AWARENESS

Almost every motorboat can create a wake, which is why boaters must be aware of the danger wakes present and the damage they can do. While common courtesy dictates boaters should control their wakes, there are consequences beyond how wakes may affect people. So, what do boaters really need to know when it comes to owning their wake?

Under Minnesota law, the damage your wake causes is treated the same as damage caused by an actual collision. Personal watercraft (PWC) must stay at least 150 feet from shore. There is no required distance for boats, but by staying at least 200 feet from shore or other structures boaters can reduce the likelihood their wakes will cause damage. If you're engaged in an activity that creates artificially enhanced wakes, a greater distance from shore is necessary to prevent damage.

Environmental impacts of wakes

Large wakes produced by watercraft can result in a variety of negative environmental consequences, including:

- Shoreline erosion;
- Impaired water quality resulting from increased sediment in the water;
- Loss of shoreline vegetation, which helps stabilize the shore and provides important habitat for fish and wildlife.

These impacts are greater when water levels are high and shorelines are saturated. Boaters must be aware that their actions directly impact the environment. For more,

see:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/etiquette.html>

Medicine Lake National Night Out!

Tuesday, August 5th 6pm to 8pm

Join us at **Jevne Park**
Bring a Chair and a Neighbor!

Butcher Salt Food Truck will be there!

Full Meal for \$5
(Subsidized by the city)



POLICE • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

COUNCIL VOTES



JULY 7, 2025

The following motions were approved with Mayor Heim, Councilmembers McNaughton, Hovey, Tomczik, and Zelazny in favor except as noted.

- Agenda
- June 2, 2025 City Council Meeting minutes
- Summary spending, receipts and cash balances through June 30, 2025
- Approve resolution 25-16 approving amendment to SEH construction services contract.
- Adjourn

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING AT THE CITY COUNCIL OF MEDICINE LAKE TO CONSIDER AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING SMOKING IN CITY PARKS AND CITY PROPERTY WITHIN THE CITY OF MEDICINE LAKE, MN

OFFICIAL NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council will hold a public hearing on the 4th day of August, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

GOT NEWS?

We hope you're enjoying the all-digital edition of The Medicine Laker! We (the editors) appreciate your patience as we convert to this new format and add new features. We'll still be publishing monthly.

Submit your articles by the **10th of each month to be included in that month's issue**. (If you're including images, please submit as separate files and indicate the order they are to appear.)

Watch for the latest edition on or about the 20th of each month.

Send your news to:

news@cityofmedicinelake.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT (NNO)

August 5, 6-8p



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, August 4 at 6p

MLFD

Tuesday, August 5 at 7p

Tuesday, August 19 at 7p

PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, August 21 at 6p