

# THE LAKER

Volume LXXI issue no. 12

December 2025



## MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR

CHRIS HEIM, MAYOR

### HELLO NEIGHBORS!

Winter is here! I'm looking forward to seeing many of you out on the frozen lake enjoying the activities that make Medicine Lake so special. This will be our third year of near-daily lake plunges throughout the winter—perhaps not enjoyable, but definitely rejuvenating! As always, please stay safe on the ice this winter. Below are a few key updates in our city

### KEY UPDATES

#### CITY OF MEDICINE LAKE—LOWEST TAX PERCENT INCREASE IN HENNEPIN COUNTY

Our city's annual tax levy increases have been among the lowest in Hennepin County—and in the state—for several years. We are proud to share that Medicine Lake's 2.4% tax levy increase for 2026 is the lowest of all cities in Hennepin County in the current preliminary levy report. According to the available data, 90% of our neighboring cities approved increases of 5% or more, and one-third had increases at or above 10%.

Here's the link: <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-11/2026-preliminary-levies-website.xlsx>

#### NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR CONTINUOUS WATER LEVEL AND TEMPERATURE MONITORING

As you may recall, high water levels this summer affected lake use over the 4th of July. To improve how we track and communicate lake conditions, we are pleased to share that the City of Medicine Lake has partnered with the City of Plymouth to implement new technology that provides continuous readings of both lake level and water temperature. These measurements will be updated regularly on both city websites, giving residents valuable information for planning lake activities and staying informed. You can view the new data page here: <https://cityofmedicinelake.com/medicine-lake/>

#### HOOKING UP TO CITY WATER—PLEASE REVIEW ALL REQUIRED STEPS

We are making good progress with residents connecting to city water. There are several steps in the permitting process, and it can be easy to overlook an important requirement. Your plumbing contractor should guide you through this, but you can help ensure a smooth process by being aware of the permits involved. The City of Plymouth oversees the permits and fees for the water hookup itself, and a right-of-way permit is required through the City of Medicine Lake. All requirements are clearly outlined on our forms and website, so please take a moment to review them, and if you have any questions, please contact [public\\_works@cityofmedicinelake.com](mailto:public_works@cityofmedicinelake.com).

You can find the details under: "Water Installation" on our permits page: <https://cityofmedicinelake.com/forms-permits/>.

**Chris Heim**

Mayor, The City of Medicine Lake

### IN THIS ISSUE...

**Want to see and learn more about the new MLFD patch?**  
See **pages 2 and 3**.

**Be prepared for winter and ice safety** by visiting **pages 3 and 4**.

**Learn about this year's ski trail** on **page 4**.

**Heard about the new water monitoring buoy on ML?** If not, see **page 5**.

**City Council Votes or monthly Meeting Dates?** Go to **page 6**.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### January 5

Early Bird Registration for Holes 4 Heroes

#### January 5

City Council Meeting, 6p

#### January 10

Laker Submissions Deadline

#### January 15

Planning Commission, 6p

#### February 8

Holes 4 Heroes, 11:30a

# Hot Flashes FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

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

Thank you for celebrating and joining us as we looked back through 75 years! This year's events allowed us to reflect on our history, learn about old times, and find out more about how we got where we are today. (Shout out also to the Plymouth Fire Department as they marked their 65th. We shared stories, exchanged photos, and helped round out a lot of history you read this year!)

Twenty years ago, when I realized MLFD was founded in 1950, I started counting down to the diamond anniversary (so far away!) and over those years we've had the privilege of working with many great people from other agencies, and I noticed that nearly every department had a patch—except MLFD.

Fifteen years ago, I threw together a busy combination of fire and city symbols just for fun...not expecting it would end up becoming anything official. Yet, it adorns our uniforms today. You have likely seen this embedded on flyers and other announcements.

Ten years ago, at a training weekend at Camp Ripley I met Mike Galigano from Seattle Fire, who spoke about the significance of fire department symbols, including a department's patch. I



have included his words below, which seem more relevant during this year's reflection than ever.

Five years ago, during COVID and amidst a huge turnover of retiring membership, I challenged the membership to decide what the department should look like at 75 and refocus on that future. Since then, we've transformed in many ways: a station refresh, more capable and dependable trucks & equipment, additional volunteers, more community involvement, fundraisers, better training, and building relationships with other departments.

We've come a long way from the decades ago when the firefighters built their own garage bays, painted red whatever trucks we could find for cheap, and made do with the minimal equipment they could scrape together. Captain Galigano's words seem even more fitting:

*"The ability to have [the department] patch has been bought at considerable cost. Your department did not just spring up out of nowhere, but was built with the blood and sweat of people, many of whom you will never know.*

*They battled every obstacle imaginable to ensure that a fire department would serve their community. The firehouse, engines, trucks, equipment and firefighters are all a reality because of their vision. And that vision inspires faith in the members of our communities that help will come in their time of need."*

With that in mind and how far we've come, it never seemed like a better time than now to revisit that symbol of the fire department. Visitors to our open house may have noticed the early reveal on the doors of the new Utility truck...

## HOT FLASHES CONTINUED...

A non-anniversary variant of this patch will be our symbol going forward. Instead of embedding the duck logo the design expands the scene beyond it and even includes the specific view of the peninsula as you come around the water from the south. Something that will carry special meaning and look proud on our shoulders. (Special thanks to Lieutenant Dan Schleddy for making this idea a reality.)

As we enter our 76th year, we look forward to the next chapter and what lies ahead as we approach 100 years of service.

Let the countdown begin...just 24 years to go!



### EVENTS (Asst. Fire Chief, Mike Fox)



Thanks to all who joined in the 5K Turkey Trot on 11/24! The roads were icy, but the hot chocolate and hot cider were warm. This is our second year holding a formal 5K and we are hoping to make this event an annual tradition.

We also want to thank all those who supported our 4th annual Slices & Sirens event on 12/14 right before the Vikings-Cowboys game. Jet's Pizza supports us each year with a discounted menu and delivery bags to help us bring orders to Medicine Lake and South



Shore residents. Conveniently, we also get to layer in some useful training topics like driving, vehicle staging, and radio communications, but the best benefit is staying connected with members of the community.

This year, we delivered 83 items to 36 different addresses and collected nearly \$1100 in tips & donations that we are using to renovate B11 (our rescue boat) with new wiring and some rescue eqpt improvements. Thank you MLFD supporters!

Another great way to support MLFD: join us! Call Mike Fox (651-353-9861) or email [fire@cityofmedicinelake.com](mailto:fire@cityofmedicinelake.com) to learn more about the department, get a tour, or join a training.

### WINTER AND ICE SAFETY FOR OUR LAKESIDE COMMUNITY (EMERGENCY MANAGER, BRIAN MALECHA)

As winter settles in across Minnesota, our lakeside community transforms into a wonderland of snow and ice. However, with this beauty comes the need for extra caution, especially around the lake. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) reminds everyone that "ice is never 100% safe." Ice thickness can vary greatly—even on the same body of water—due to factors like currents, snow cover, and temperature changes.

Before venturing out for ice fishing, skating, or snowmobiling, always check local ice conditions, wear safety gear such as ice picks, a lifejacket and let people know where you are going.

Ice picks like the ones pictured can be purchased at any sporting goods store.



## WINTER AND ICE SAFETY CONTINUED...

The DNR recommends a minimum of 4 inches of new, clear ice for walking, 5-7 inches for snowmobiles or ATVs, and at least 8-12 inches for cars or small trucks. Double these guidelines for white or snow-covered ice, which is much weaker than clear ice.

If you do fall through the ice, remain calm, turn toward the direction you came from, and use your ice picks to pull yourself out, kicking your feet to get onto solid ice. Once out, roll away from the hole to distribute your weight. For more details visit the [DNR's ice safety page](#).

Let's stay safe and enjoy all that winter has to offer.

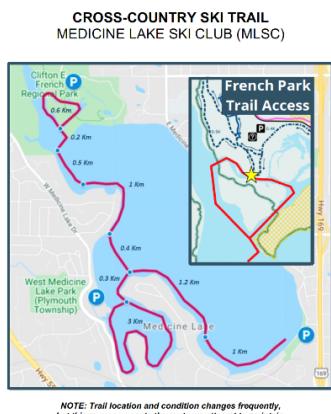


## MEDICINE LAKE SKI CLUB GEARING UP FOR NEW SEASON

With snow and cold temps arriving in December, the Medicine Lake Ski Club is looking forward to the ski season! The trail will be in the same location as it has been the past two years. Grooming and event updates will be shared via the email list and Facebook page. If you'd like to get on the list, please send a request to [medicinelakeskiclub@gmail.com](mailto:medicinelakeskiclub@gmail.com).

Is there a rock, buoy, dock post or anything else sticking out of the ice in front of your home that could damage grooming equipment? Please consider marking it so our groomers can avoid it when grooming the ski trail. Anything tall or reflective – such as a reflective driveway marker or a post with reflective tape – should be visible. Thank you for your help in keeping our equipment and our groomers safe!

Here's to great snow and happy skiing!



## OTTERS AND CLEAN WATER" A HOLIDAY GIFT FOR WILDLIFE

River otters are playful, adorable mammals that remain active all winter long. They slide across snowy banks, dive under ice, and hunt fish in cold streams and lakes. But their survival depends on clean, healthy water.

Otters are considered an indicator species: their presence signals that rivers and lakes are healthy enough to support abundant fish and intact natural shoreline habitat. Pollution from road salt, litter, and runoff can degrade these waters, threatening otters and the ecosystems they depend on. Chloride from de-icing salt, for example, builds up in rivers and lakes over time, harming aquatic life and disrupting food chains.

This holiday season, we can give otters the gift of clean water. By practicing smart salting, disposing of trash properly, and keeping storm drains clear, we help protect otters' winter playgrounds. Every small action preserves the clean water otters, and all of us, need to thrive.

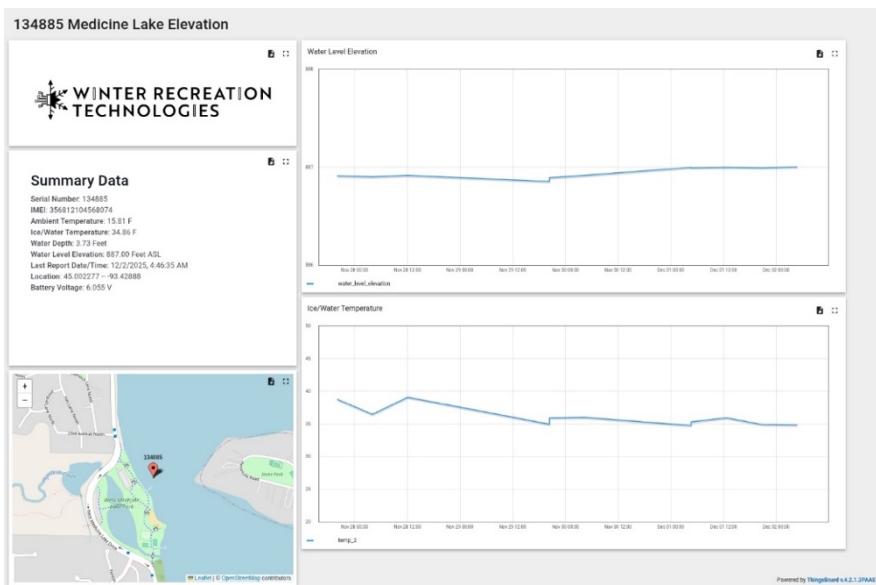
Take a winter walk near a local stream or lake and look for signs of otters: slides in the snow, tracks along the shoreline, or holes in the ice where they enter the water. These sightings remind us that protecting water quality benefits both people and wildlife.

# WATER LEVELS ON MEDICINE LAKE

The City of Plymouth recently installed a water level monitoring buoy just off the shore of West Medicine Lake Park, 1920 W. Medicine Lake Dr.

The buoy tracks water levels and temperature and adds them to an interactive dashboard for lake users to find without having to request the information from the city.

Those with questions should contact the Water Resources Division at [engineering@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:engineering@plymouthmn.gov) or 763-509-5500.



**Medicine Lake regulations:** Slow no-wake speed when the water level exceeds 889.4 feet for three consecutive days and remains in place until the lake level drops to 889.4 feet or below for at least three consecutive days. Water level regulations help protect shorelines and prevent erosion.

We have added the water monitoring information to our city website:

<https://cityofmedicinelake.com/medicine-lake/>

**UPDATE:** Unfortunately, the newly installed water-level monitoring buoy near West Medicine Lake Park was vandalized earlier this week and is currently non-functional as the power switch was broken and lights were removed. We are coordinating with the consultant to identify tamper-resistant design modifications to prevent similar incidents in the future. The consultant is actively constructing a replacement unit, with the goal of delivering and deploying it before the end of the year. In the interim, the website linked below will remain accessible; however, no new data will be reported or uploaded until the replacement buoy is installed and operational.

## LETTER FROM THE CO-EDITOR

Hello ML Laker fans,

This is one of your friendly neighborhood co-editors letting you know that this will be my last edition of the laker. I have truly enjoyed working with and getting to know Laura over the past five years. I learned a lot as well.

I took on this role with the idea of devoting five years to it. Many months ago I advised the city of my plan to resign after the December issue, enabling me to devote more time to other ventures and pursuits.

Laura chose to go solo for the time being. If you feel the calling to help her out, please email her at [news@cityofmedicinelake.com](mailto:news@cityofmedicinelake.com). She's fun to work with and super nice.

It's been a pleasure,

Julia Wear-Jackson

# COUNCIL VOTES



## DECEMBER 1, 2025

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

- Agenda
- September 6, 2025 city council meeting minutes and special city council minutes
- Summary spending, receipts and cash balances through September 30, 2025
- Approve Ordinance 148 prohibiting metal detecting in city parks and city property
- Approve resolution 25-20 publication of Ordinance 148 by title and summary
- Approve resolution 25-21 approval of expenditures for grading and seeding at Jevne Park
- Approve resolution 25-22 approving amendment to construction services contract with SEH
- Adjourn

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**Send your news to:**

[news@cityofmedicinelake.com](mailto:news@cityofmedicinelake.com)

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, January 5 at 6p

### MLFD

Tuesday, January 6 at 7p

Tuesday, January 20 at 7p

### PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 15 at 6p



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# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

My deepest gratitude to everyone who joined in Medicine Lake Cares! Thanks to your incredible generosity, our 7th annual fundraiser was not only a resounding success, it was our **largest fundraiser ever**.

Together, we raised **\$38,500 locally**, which was matched by a corporate donor, bringing our total impact to **\$77,000** for Second Harvest Heartland. That's the equivalent of nearly **231,000 meals** for families across Minnesota.

Your support helps Second Harvest reach nearly **1,000 food shelves, soup kitchens, shelters, and senior centers**. And this year, it means even more as food insecurity continues to rise.

Whether you gave \$10 or \$1,000, dropped off a check, donated online, or helped spread the word, you made a difference.

This fundraiser isn't just about dollars. It's about neighbors showing up for neighbors. It's about Medicine Lake coming together to feed hope.

A heartfelt thank you to Heidi Heim for reaching out to neighbors through emails and Facebook posts, and to Barry Warner for delivering mailbox fliers and handling the collection and remittance of checks to Second Harvest

On behalf of the Community Club and Second Harvest Heartland: **Thank you for your kindness, your generosity, and your heart.**

Warmly,

**Paul Samson**

Medicine Lake Community Club

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