


# 11 staff members, seven retirees honored

**Pequot Lakes**  
An organization is only as good as its people – and the Pequot Lakes School District is fortunate to have an outstanding staff who are dedicated to students and this community.

On May 25, the district hosted an Employee Recognition Celebration at Breezy Point Resort. The following staff were honored at the event:

- Kelly Crosby



**KURT STUMPF**  
*Patriot Perspective*

(Eagle View Elementary School): Region 5 Educator of Excellence.

- Kyle Spray (middle school): Region 5 Educator of Excellence.
- Megan Johnson (high school): Region 5 Educator of Excellence

and Teacher of the Year.

- Mike O’Neil (middle school): Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals 2022 Minnesota Middle Level Principal of the Year.
- Brian Alt (high school ): 20 years of service.
- Jessica Mudgett (Early Childhood): 20 years of service.
- Rachel Sullivan (Eagle View): 20 years of service.
- Mindi Brill (Eagle View): 25 years of service.
- Anna Larson (middle school): 25 years of service.
- Andrea Neva (Eagle View): 25 years of service.
- Lynn Smith (high school): 25 years of service.

**Retirements**

- Debra Buckner: high school paraprofessional, 5 years of service from 2016–2021.

- Mark Rieschl: high school/middle school custodian, 5.5 years of service from 2016–2021.
- Janet Durham: high school paraprofessional, 23 years of service from 1998–2021.
- Eileen Nelson: Eagle View social worker, 24 years of service from 1998–2022.
- Tom Smith: high school physical education teacher, 31.5 years of service from 1991–2022.
- Barb Wallace: high school secretary, 33 years of service from 1989–2022.
- Wade Hoppe: middle school math teacher, 37 years of service from 1985–2022.

A video showcasing the seven retirees’ careers is now posted on the district website. Please join us in thanking and honoring these and all staff members.

**Kurt Stumpf is Pequot Lakes**

## ECTC and Crosslake Communications to become Tremolo Communications

**EMILY** — Emily Cooperative Telephone Company and Crosslake Communications announced they will operate as Tremolo Communications, powered by ECTC, by the end of 2022.

ECTC and Crosslake Communications offer high-speed internet, cable TV, local telephone, managed IT and computer repair services. For more than 50 years, ECTC has provided communications services to the areas of Emily, Fifty Lakes, Little Pine and Fairfield townships, also serving parts of Aitkin County.

Crosslake Communications is owned by Tri-Co Technologies, LLC, a partnership of three Minnesota-based telecommunications companies; BEVCOMM, headquartered in Blue Earth; West Central Telephone Association, headquartered in Sebeka; and Emily Cooperative Telephone Company, of Emily.



**Contributed**  
Emily Cooperative Telephone Company (ECTC) and Crosslake Communications announced that they will operate as Tremolo Communications, powered by ECTC, by the end of 2022.

Josh Netland, CEO/general manager of ECTC and president of Tri-Co Technologies, LLC, said in a news release: “The ECTC board of directors and management have had numerous discussions that date back to 2015 regarding updating the co-op’s name as the industry has transitioned from providers of telephone

service to providing internet and communications services.”

Netland added: “Bringing Crosslake Communications under Tremolo Communications adds consistency to our companies, streamlines operations and reduces customer confusion. ... Both, Emily Cooperative Telephone Company and Tri-Co Technologies, LLC will remain parent companies but will do business as Tremolo Communications. We’re excited about the new look.”

In the coming months, customers may see the updated name and logo appear on the company website, service vehicles and signs, and employees using the new name when calling business offices. Although the name is changing to Tremolo Communications, service, people and values will remain unchanged.

### BRIEF

### Emily Cooperative Telephone Company to expand fiber optic services

**EMILY** — The Emily Cooperative Telephone Company announced it is expanding its fiber internet footprint to the Whitefish Chain of Lakes area, including Ideal, Timothy and Jenkins townships in 2022.

The ECTC is committed to deploying 100% fiber optic coverage to all residents who request service throughout Ideal Township, Jenkins Township and the city of Jenkins.

Josh Netland, CEO and general manager of ECTC, said in a news release: “One of the cooperative’s strategic objectives is growth. This expansion project allows for that growth, and the residents in this area need high-speed internet services.”

Construction has begun in the northernmost portions of Ideal, Timothy and Jenkins townships, bringing fiber optic services to around 600 locations. Discussions are underway to include fiber coverage for the remainder of Ideal and

Jenkins townships and a portion of the city of Jenkins.

“The entire fiber project will expand over two years, potentially extending into a third year depending on any unforeseen issues,” Netland said. “Phase two of construction would kick off in 2023, serving the remaining portions of Ideal and Jenkins townships, including the northern half of the city of Jenkins.”

Additional information can be found at fibertoyourarea.com or by calling 218-763-3000.

## Artists take the stage at Festival of the Arts

Artists from across the area – both students and community members – displayed their works at the Festival of the Arts at Pequot Lakes High School on Thursday, April 21.

Paintings, sketches, sculptures and even live perfor-

mances were there for the public to take in and admire. The Patriot Athletic Center was sectioned off to showcase works of art from the community, from high school students and from the young artists at Eagle View Element-

ary School.

Additionally, music and dance performances took place in the auditorium, and various fun activities like face painting were available for children in attendance.

Scarlet Alexander, 7, gets her face painted to mimic a cat April 21 at the Festival of the Arts in Pequot Lakes.

**Dan Determan / Echo Journal**



### MAKING THE GRADE

**Minnesota State University, Moorhead**

The following local students graduated from Minnesota State University, Moorhead on Friday, May 13: **Kailynn Allord**, Merrifield, Bachelor of Science degree in nursing; **Ashley Foster**, Pequot Lakes, Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology; **Megan Malecha**, Breezy Point, Master of Healthcare Administration degree; **Benjamin Reynolds**, Crosslake, Bachelor of Science degree in business analytics; **Layton Rivard**, Nisswa, Bachelor of Science degree in project management; **Zac Spohn**, Nisswa, magna cum laude, Bachelor of Sci-

ence degree in business administration; and **Amy Wiese**, Pine River, Master of Healthcare Administration degree.

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

The following local students recently graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato: **Alexis Rutherford**, Backus, Bachelor of Science degree in management; and **Kate Martig**, Hackensack, Bachelor of Science degree in social work, magna cum laude.

**Northwest Technical College**

The following local students received

achievement awards during the annual Student Achievement Celebration at Northwest Technical College in Bemidji: **Betsy Woodford**, Hackensack, human resources, outstanding student; and **Alex Hannahs**, Pequot Lakes, commercial refrigeration, most improved.

**New York Institute of Technology**

**Ashlynn Reynolds**, of Pequot Lakes, was one of 170 undergraduate and graduate students who showcased their research and creative scholarly work at the New York Institute of Technology’s annual Symposium of University Research and Creative Expression.

## Soulful Horse and its impact on students

**By Steffanie Arneson**  
hthththTHTHTHTH-THWHACK! I vividly remember the spitballs – or more accurately, the little balls of paper concrete that I had to chisel off my chalkboard.

I knew who the culprit was, but he was clever enough that I never caught him in the act. He knew how to fly under the radar and not get caught. He was one of my tough kids in my early days of teaching. His sibling a few years later – even tougher.

I couldn’t fathom the life experiences they carried and it left little room (or interest) in learning math – or anything else. Even so I tried everything I could to get through to them and teach the math standards that my job requires me to do.

That year there were many times where I wished I could drag the eldest out of the classroom and toss him into a round pen with one of my horses. This kid – whose life was so much beyond his control. I wanted to offer him an opportunity for my horses to work their magic. An opportunity for my horses to help him realize how many things actually were within his control if he was intentional in his choices and actions. An opportunity to look at life from a new perspective.

I still think about this student regularly and can’t help but think that maybe in some way he was the one who led me to Soulful Horse. Life events led me to reconnect with another couple of local horse enthusiasts who saw similar needs in youth through their own professional experiences. We got to visiting and in 2019 Soulful Horse became a reality.

Given our current

professions, we know the demand for mental health resources far outweighs the resources available. Our goal is to supplement, not replace, these services to make sure our local youth are thriving and not just surviving.

At Soulful Horse, we offer participants an opportunity to heal, learn and grow with an equine partner. Based on their story, participants are partnered with an equine that will meet his/her needs. A qualified coach then facilitates the interactions between participant and horse based on session themes, including but not limited to communication, fear, boundaries, connections, anxiety, depression and conflict resolution, to name a few.

It has been thrilling to watch the transition from the anxiety-ridden participant who clings to the saddle while being led around the arena to that of a confident and independent rider who is able to effectively communicate his or her needs. The rider who transitions from a passive participant to an active leader. The participant who is plagued by anxiety – yet able to sleep without issue.

These kids realize they are able to control a nearly 1,000 pound animal with the flick of a rope; a look; or a gentle push with one or two fingers. Minimal effort can yield big results when we connect and play with our horses and even better things when we can connect these events to our clients’ lives.

Soulful Horse – a place of horses, people, and the opportunity to THRIVE – not just survive.

**Steffanie Arneson is the seventh and eighth grade math teacher at Pine River-Backus School.**

## Pine River Library offers summer reading program

**PINE RIVER** — The Pine River Library’s summer reading program, Beyond the Beaten Path, will start Monday, June 6. Interested participants can sign up for the program anytime June 6 or after at the library.

The library offers a reading for rewards program for children ages 3–18. Children can earn seven prizes throughout the program for reaching specified reading goals. Earn extra prizes by completing activities in the summer bingo game.

New this year, the Kitchigami Regional Library System will sponsor a grand prize for each library valued at \$100. Those who finish the reading program will be entered into the contest.

The Pine River Public Library will host programs in person this summer, including a weekly speaker at 10:30 a.m. Thursdays. All are invited to attend – adults and children. Participants do not have to be in the reading program to attend. The speaker line up is:

- June 9: Cass County/Department of Natural

Resources with Smokey Bear.

- June 16: Cass County Boat and Water Safety.
- June 23: Minnesota Raptor Center at The Warehouse in Pine River.
- June 30: Ideal Flyers RC Airplanes.
- July 7: Headwaters Science Center Reptile Show.
- July 14: Pedal Pine River.
- July 21: Gardening Gurus.
- July 28: Minnesota DNR animal furs and tracks.

Following the weekly speaker a craft will be available for children. The craft will be available as a take-n-make or it may be completed in the library with library staff.

The Pine River Public Library will offer a family friendly musical concert at the Cass County Fair at 4:30 p.m. Friday, June 24. Ralph Covert will present Ralph’s World, a fun and energetic musical performance.

The Pine River Public Library has many events planned for the summer with schedules available at the library. Events are also listed on the library Facebook page and KRLS.org website.