



BATHED IN SUNSHINE

Travis Grimler / Echo Journal

Alan Bibey and Grasstowne's audience was bathed in sunshine at the Lakes Bluegrass Festival on Friday at the Lakes Music and Events Park just north of Pine River. The 2021 event by comparison was troubled with a drought-breaking heavy rain and a thunderstorm. See story and more photos on page A15.

CROSSLAKE

Design work begins

Intersection preliminary work to begin

By Chelsey Perkins
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — More in-depth planning is set to begin in earnest for improvements to one of the most prominent intersections in Crosslake.

The Crow Wing County Board authorized a contract with Bolton & Menk engineering firm to assist with public engagement, engineering analysis and final design for the intersection of county highways 3 and 66, scheduled for 2024.

The Aug. 23 decision means preliminary work can commence ahead of construction, the costs of which are almost entirely covered by federal grants.

"The city of Crosslake is a tourist area and the impacts of construction and these types of improvements in that area are important to the city and the businesses, so we want to make sure we're doing a very good job of public outreach," said Tim Bray, county engineer.

The planned project comes in response to the 2024 construction of the National Loon Center in Crosslake, which is expected to draw as

ROAD: Page A6

Schools prepare to open doors

Teachers are excited and busy

By Echo Journal Staff
Area school buildings are quickly coming alive again with the start of a new - and normal - school year approaching.

Most area students start school Tuesday, Sept. 6, though Crosslake Community School students return to class Thursday, Sept. 1.

Area administrators are excited for the school year - with hopes

students are too - and teachers are busy getting classrooms ready.

Following is a back to school look at area schools.

Pequot Lakes School District

The Pequot Lakes School District heads into the new year with an increase in enrollment over the previous year, though just how

large of an increase is unclear.

The district finished the 2021-22 school year with 1,734 students in grades K-12, and expected a jump to 1,757 this year. Now it looks as though there may be even more students.

"Our enrollment numbers are extremely preliminary," Superintendent Kurt Stumpf said

SCHOOLS: Page A3



Nancy Vogt / Echo Journal

Tawnia Allyn helps her fifth grade son, Levi, put school supplies in his locker Monday at Pequot Lakes Middle School.

Nisswa's \$25K donation helps food shelf

By Megan Buffington
Echo Journal

PEQUOT LAKES — The city of Nisswa donated \$25,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds to the Lakes Area Food Shelf in Pequot Lakes last month as food shelves across the state

struggle with rising food prices and demand.

In March, when the Lakes Area Food Shelf first began to see a spike in visitation, they gave presentations to Nisswa and other area city councils to ask for their help.

Nisswa City Council member Jesse Zahn

drove the decision to target the money to the food shelf. He was passionate about the need to spend federal dollars to directly assist local citizens.

The council unani-

mously agreed and voted June 21 to donate to the food shelf.

"We're really happy to have it and honored to have it," said Mark Casey, Lakes Area Food Shelf board member. "But that money is already gone."

LAFS and other food shelves are seeing the same things shoppers are seeing: higher prices and less food available.

"These are our friends; these are our neighbors," said Kathy Adams, LAFS director.

FOOD: Page A6

Student driver stickers give peace of mind

By Travis Grimler
Echo Journal

PINE RIVER — A column in the PineandLakes Echo Journal in early August caught the attention of two mothers in Pine River.

The subject of State Patrol Sgt. Jesse Grabow's column was the legality of having a "Student Driver" sticker or magnet on the vehicle of students who are practicing driving for their license or new to driving legally. A parent had asked whether those stickers are legal.

Grabow said they are legal, but he advised

the parent to consider a sticker that is different from the "Student Driver" stickers required on driver's education cars.

Though maybe not the norm, the column was relatable for Sarah Norman, a mother of three from Pine River who has used a student driver sticker on her vehicle since her oldest, Hunter, began driving approximately two years ago.

"A friend had them for her kids," Norman said.

"When our oldest got his permit, we got one.

That's kind of where I

got the idea. I think he

STICKER: Page A6

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FOOD: Page A6



Travis Grimler / Echo Journal

After reading a column on student driver stickers Aug. 11 Pine River mother Sarah Norman shared her experience with using the stickers. Her son, Tate, said other drivers treat him more kindly when they

see the stickers.

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