

## Jack's Big Bass Bash raises over \$18K

By Megan Buffington  
Echo Journal

CROSSLAKE — People gathered on the docks and deck of Crosslake's Moonlite Bay for the first Jack's Big Bass Bash Fishing Tournament and silent auction Sunday, Aug. 7.

The 50-boat tournament, auction and donations at the event raised over \$18,000 for suicide awareness in schools and the community in honor of Jack Hennies, a Pequot Lakes graduate who took his own life in January.

The funds will go toward the Lighthouse Project, a local, student-led organi-

zation focused on mental health and suicide prevention.

Money will also go toward Jack's Jumps, a memorial that will improve the terrain park experience at Mount Ski Gull.

Harry Neva and Sawyer Zeidler won the tournament with a 16.56-pound bag of five bass. They also won the big bass category with a 4.08 pound bass.

Megan Buffington, Echo Journal intern, may be reached at 218-855-5854 or [megan.buffington@pineandlakes.com](mailto:megan.buffington@pineandlakes.com). She is a 2021 Pequot Lakes High School graduate who attends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Megan Buffington / Echo Journal

The first round of boats enters Moonlight Bay from Cross Lake on Aug. 7 to weigh in their fish for Jack's Big Bass Bash Fishing Tournament on the docks of the Moonlite Bay restaurant.

## Locals file for election

# 'IT'S A GROUP EFFORT'

Family named Crow Wing County Farm Family of the Year

By Frank Lee  
Brainerd Dispatch

**D**ean and Briana Visser and their children are used to horsing around.

Their hard work as owners and operators of the Benville Equestrian Center in Pequot Lakes earned them the 2022 Crow Wing County Farm Family of the Year award, which they received Thursday, Aug. 4, at the Crow Wing County Fair.

Eighty-five farm families and operations — the most in recent memory — were honored Thursday by the University of Minnesota at the 2022 Farm Family of the Year ceremony at the annual Minnesota Farmfest near Redwood Falls; the Vissers chose to attend the county fair.

"We are very excited

and surprised and we feel like it's a group effort," Briana Visser said shortly before the award presentation.

"There's a lot of people at our stable that I



Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

Crow Wing County Commissioner Steve Barrows presents the 2022 Crow Wing County Farm Family of the Year award to Briana and Dean Visser, who own the Benville Equestrian Center near Pequot Lakes, and their children Alexis Gerst, Ryan Visser and grandson Jaxon on Thursday in the Birney Wilkins Memorial Garden at the Crow Wing County Fairgrounds.

think helped contribute to this award and a lot of family members as well."

Dean and Briana

Visser purchased 80 acres of land from her grandfather in 1992. The married couple established Benville

Equestrian Center, naming it after her grandparents, Bennie and LaVelle Myers. The property also includes

a tree farm and provided hay fields and pastureland.

**FAMILY:** Page 6

Incumbents and newcomers are getting their names on ballots for the upcoming general election.

Two incumbent Pine River-Backus School Board members and the incumbent Nisswa mayor will seek a return to office after filing Thursday, Aug. 4, along with an appointed Pequot Lakes City Council member, a longtime Lake Shore City Council and former mayor, and a newcomer in Backus.

In addition, there will be at least a three-way race for mayor in Crosslake, where two newcomers also filed for two open city council seats as of Friday, Aug. 5.

As of Monday, Aug. 8, Roman Siltman has filed for Jenkins City Council and Scott Eppen has filed for Emily mayor, two applicants who do not currently serve on the respective councils.

No application has yet been announced for the Jenkins mayor seat. Current mayor Jon Lubke is seeking the Crow Wing County District 2 seat.

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## Prevent the AIS spread

**Aquatic Invasive Species inspectors provide insight into life at the access**

By Megan Buffington  
Echo Journal

CROW WING COUNTY — If you've used a public lake access in the last 30 years, you've probably talked to a watercraft inspector.

They ask you a few questions for their surveys like, "Where was your boat last? How long was your boat out of the water?" or, if you're leaving the lake, "How long was your boat in the water? Where are you going next?"

The questions may seem tedious, but they are one part in the goal

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Megan Buffington / Echo Journal

Chad Burbank, shown in July 2022, is a law compliance representative and aquatic invasive species trainer for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

## Graduates return for 48th annual reunion

PEQUOT LAKES — Pequot Lakes held their 48th annual All Class Reunion Sunday, Aug. 7 in the Pequot Lakes High School cafeteria.

Around 65 people attended.

The Class of 1972 was the honored class, celebrating its 50-year reunion. The 55-member class had a three-day event with gatherings Friday and Saturday with 22 members attending. Seven members attended the reunion Sunday.

Ten members of the

class have died.

During the program, Don Bye, Class of 1951, was recognized as the oldest graduate attending.

In the business meeting, Betty Simenstad was re-elected president.

Vice President Vicki Palmer read the names of those that have died since the last reunion, and there was a moment of silence in their memory.

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