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Chisago County Press

Chisago County

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Inside

Breakfast Club

Special uniformed visitors came to the middle school's morning education adventure. See page 9.

Trial continues

The jury in the Schnagl trial was back at it this week after a shortened session last week, to allow attorneys to review evidence. Update on page 2.

Dept. turmoil

Citing personnel data privacy laws the county sheriff and administration aren't offering a whole lot of new info on the sudden departure of the chief deputy. See page 2.

New hall

Chisago Lake Township had its permit for a new township hall approved. See page 2.

Shafer Council

The report from Shafer is on page 15.

Erickson sentenced

A man who menaced neighbors in North Branch resulting in a SWAT call out, was in court last week. See page 4.

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North Star array gets PUC okay

by DENISE MARTIN

By springtime construction should get underway on the North Star Solar array covering several hundred acres, in the area where the rural south-east corner of the city of North Branch-Lent Township and Sunrise Township meet. The MN Public Utilities Commission approved a site permit last week and a length of high voltage transmission line for "North Star," a solar power generating facility planned by Community Energy Solar. The North Star project will collect and send solar power to the nearby Lent Township Xcel substation.

(This is a separate project in addition to the Aurora solar array site, proposed by Geronimo Energy, located across from the substation south of County Road 14. Aurora received a state permit months ago.)

Kurt Schneider, Chisago County Environmental Services, said that even though the county has no permit authority directly connected to this because of the large power generating capacity-- the developers have been in contact with the county zoning department and are being cooperative towards meeting local standards for logistics of installing a project such as this

(dust, hours of crew operations, traffic, etc.) He added, "I can't say there won't be local impacts (from construction activity) but we will continue to work to hold the developer to conditions (in the site permit plan.)"

Speaking with project facilitator Chase Whitney, after the PUC took action, the Chisago County Press was advised there are pre-construction details being worked out for the site that are requirements of the permit, but Whitney sees no impediments to the solar array moving ahead on schedule.

Chisago County Commissioner George McMahon also noted, when the County Board was informed of the state okay, that the developer took seriously the issues presented at public hearings on this project, and the level of cooperation is "probably a first" as far as developers trying to address what people outlined as their concerns.

County Administrator Bruce Messelt remarked at last week's County Board meeting that for the size and scope of this-- the largest solar generating project in the state-- it was "...amazing that it went as smoothly as it did."



Pictured: Hiram lodge members Curt Hedstrom, Ja Drum, Brian Hoffman and Food Shelf Coordinator, ai

Hiram Lodge 287 matchi for Family Pathways Foo

Lindstrom's Hiram Lodge 287 has announced its fifth year of "Double Your Donation" February fund drive, benefiting Family Pathways Chisago Lakes Area Food Shelf. The "Double Your Donation" fundraiser allows all donations to be matched dollar-for-dollar by Minnesota Masonic Charities. In order to qualify for the match, checks must be made out to the Hiram Lodge.

The Family Pathways Chisago Lakes Area Food Shelf has distributed 257,612 pounds of food, which translates into 206,090 meals. These meals were distributed during 2,307 private appointments. In 2015, Family Path-

ways distributed over 2.8 million pounds of food and served 18,922 individuals of which 53% are children.

Family Pathways Chisago Lakes Area Food Shelf serves residents in Chisago City Lindstrom, Center City Shafer and Taylor Falls. In addition to providing a monthly food shop to those who are struggling to make ends meet, participants are encouraged to choose fresh produce that is available weekly. Family Pathway Hunger Relief Services also provides a Summer Lunch Program, which helps parent of school age children with lunches through the month of June, July and August.

You can help feed families. If you are interested in contributing to this year's "Double Your Donation" opportunity, make checks out to Hiram Lodge 287, with the memo marked - Family Pathways CLA Food Shelf (Chisago Lakes Area Food Shelf) Throughout February, mail checks directly to Hiram Lodge 287, Box 681, Lind

