

NEWS AND INFORMATION

McLeod County Newsletter



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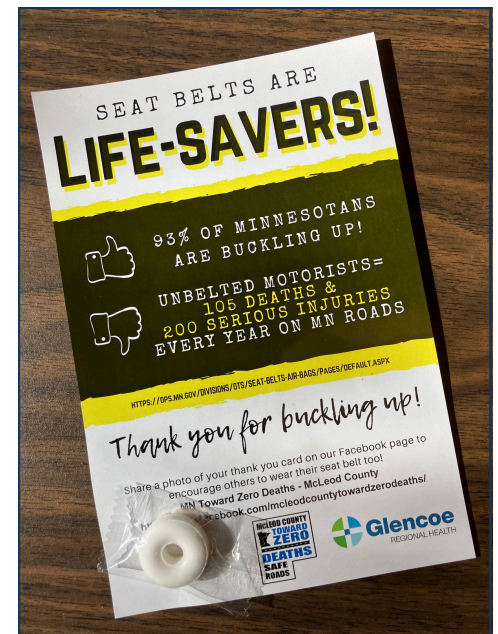
Drive safe, buckle up

It was a deadly year on McLeod County roads in 2023

Last year, the failure to use seat belts factored into 82 people losing their lives on Minnesota roads. Among them were two McLeod County crash victims who were ejected from their vehicles.

"The passenger compartment of their respective vehicles remained intact and did what it was designed to do, showing us that had they been wearing their seat belt, they likely would be with us today," said Scott Wawrzyniak, a patrol sergeant for the McLeod County Sheriff's Office and a member of the McLeod County Toward Zero Deaths Safe Roads Coalition.

The coalition, which includes public safety officials and other public members, annually reviews facts and photos collected after fatal collisions. Based on what is learned, the group recommends actions that



The McLeod County Toward Zero Deaths Safe Roads Coalition is partnering with 15 banks in the county to distribute flyers with Lifesavers to remind motorists that seat belts save lives.

might prevent future crashes. Among those actions is increasing public awareness.

2023 was a deadly year on the county's roads. Six people died in motor vehicle crashes, compared to the historic average of two or three per year.

Higher speeds, impairment caused by alcohol and

See ZERO DEATHS Page 2

Seat belts saved lives in many crashes

ZERO DEATHS from Page 1

cannabis use, and other risky driver behaviors were involved in the majority of 2023's fatal county crashes, according to Wawrzyniak.

But the one factor that helped save lives in many of last year's 426 county crashes was seat belts.

"In 2021, 93% of Minnesotans were using seat belts," he noted. "That number has increased upward of 10 percentage points since the early 2000s and hopefully we can reach the upper 90s in the percentage of Minnesotans using seat belts by the late 2020s."

To reach that goal, the

Driven by data, best practices and research, Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths mission is to create a culture for which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable. It aims to do this by bringing together driver education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical and trauma services.

Several law enforcement agencies in the county participate in the TZD traffic enforcement program, which is paid for by state and federal grants. The stepped-up patrol puts more law enforcement on the roads during times of higher travel, such as around holidays.

For more information about the coalition, call Scott Waibel, the coalition's chair, at 320-484-9326.

McLeod County Toward Zero Deaths Safe Roads Coalition is partnering with 15 banks to remind their driver-through customers that seat belts are lifesavers. More than 3,000 informational flyers with

LifeSavers mints are being distributed to people spotted using seatbelts. The effort is a reward for good driving behaviour.

See ZERO DEATHS Page 6

McLeod County News and Information

Issue 18

McLeod County News and Information is published quarterly. Visit www.tinyurl.com/3mrui54a to see past McLeod County newsletters or subscribe to have the newsletter delivered to your residence or business. The next issue of the newsletter is tentatively scheduled to be published September 27, 2024.

McLeod County was established in 1856.

Serving the cities of Biscay, Brownton, Glencoe, Hutchinson, Lester Prairie, Plato, Silver Lake, Stewart and Winsted; the townships of Acoma, Bergen, Collins, Glencoe, Hale, Hassan Valley, Helen, Hutchinson, Lynn, Penn, Rich Valley, Round Grove, Sumter and Winsted; and independent school districts #423 (Hutchinson), #424 (Lester Prairie), #465 (Litchfield), #2159 (Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart), #2365 (Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop), #2687 (Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted) and #2859 (Glencoe-Silver Lake).



Contact Information

Government Center

520 Chandler Ave. N. | Glencoe, MN 55336
p. 320-864-1328 | f. 320-864-1809

Court Administration

830 11th St. E. | Glencoe, MN 55336
p. 320-864-1281 | f. 320-864-5905

Law Enforcement Center

801 10th St. E. | Glencoe, MN 55336
p. 320-864-3134 | f. 320-864-5920

Fairgrounds/Parks and Recreation

840 Century Ave. S.W. | Hutchinson, MN 55350
p. 320-484-4334 | f. 320-864-1811

Environmental Services

1065 Fifth Ave. S.E. | Hutchinson, MN 55350
p. 320-484-4300 | f. 320-484-4315

Public Works/Highway

1400 Adams St. | Hutchinson, MN 55350
p. 320-484-4321 | f. 320-234-6971

Save time scheduling appointments with QLess

Planning a visit to the McLeod County Government Center? Save time with QLess, the County's virtual waiting line and appointment scheduler. Simply visit <https://tinyurl.com/b5yey8ds> to schedule your appointment in advance or check for same-day availability. Call 320-864-1426 for assistance.

Use QLess for your License Center, Assessor, Auditor-Treasurer, Recorder and Veterans Services needs.

Once you've scheduled an appointment, QLess will send you live updates on your place in line. Appointments scheduled with QLess are prioritized over walk-in appointments.

Administrator's Message

McLeod County: even better in Spring and Summer!

Our communities are active and the construction season continues despite impacts from recent, above-average rainfall.

ADMINISTRATOR

Sheila Murphy



It's a busy time for McLeod County staff and contractors as they implement parks and fairgrounds improvements supported by the American Rescue Plan Act dollars. The building in progress at the Fairgrounds will support mid-size events, host a small livestock show ring, provide additional restroom facilities, along with a climate-controlled nursing area. Road projects continue to move ahead, with Hutchinson and Winsted having the highest impact from pending improvements. Watch for updates on our County website.

Visit our booth at the McLeod County Fair Commercial Building August 15 through August 18. FREE Admission again in 2024!



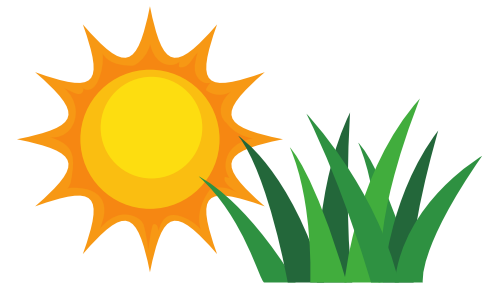
Members of the 2024 McLeod County Student Government Day group stop for a picture with Judges Maher and Winters during a visit to the Courthouse and Law Enforcement Center. Thank you to all of the students and officials who participated.



Commissioner Paul Wright gave a presentation about Wright Farms and farming diversity at the Soil and Water Conservation District's regional meeting in June. He was joined by McLeod County Dairy Princesses Shelby Swanson (left) and McKenna Wright (middle). McKenna Wright is also a finalist for 2024's Princess Kay of the Milky Way! We look forward to seeing McKenna's butter sculpture!



The new Gold Star Families Memorial Monument was unveiled on Memorial Day this year. You can visit this tribute and others at McLeod County Veterans Memorial Park in Hutchinson. Thank you to Dave Skoog and Cassandra Carrigan for their recent presentation about the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at our McLeod County Board of Commissioners meeting.



Congratulations to McLeod County's 2024 Farm Family! The University of Minnesota Extension office recognized Lindeman Farms at our McLeod County Board of Commissioners meeting on July 2. Thank you to Kevin, Penny, and Justin for attending (shown left). An additional thank you to Kevin for his commitment to serving on several County-related committees despite his busy schedule.

Remembering Vietnam veterans

The Wall that Heals coming to Hutchinson August 20-25

More than 3 million Americans served in the U.S. Armed forces in the Vietnam War, and 58,281 made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. This August, grateful visitors will have the chance to honor those who served, and remember those who died, when The Wall That Heals makes a stop in Hutchinson.



The Wall that Heals, a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, along with a mobile Education Center, will be in Hutchinson August 22-25. It is free and open to the public 24 hours.

The Wall That Heals, a program of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, is a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that spans 375 feet and includes 140 panels with the names of more than 58,000 service members. It also includes a Mobile Education Center that features a timeline of "The War and The Wall" and provides additional information about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The Wall is scheduled to arrive in Hutchinson with a full escort of motorcycles and first responders on Tuesday, August 20. Construction of The Wall begins on Wednesday, August 21, and

then from Thursday, August 22, until 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 25, it will be free and open to the public, 24 hours a day, at 1150 Benjamin Avenue S.E., Hutchinson.

The public is invited to attend an opening ceremony at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 22, and a closing ceremony at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 25. Group tours are available on Thursday and Friday, and people who are interested should call Rochelle and Todd Drahos at 320-583-6638.

Volunteer opportunities are also available. Call Jeff Sterner at 612-719-6296, or email jeffjmscustom@hotmail.com

The Wall That Heals

When: August 20-25

Where: 1150 Benjamin Avenue S.E., Hutchinson

Questions: Visit www.thewallthathealshutchinson.com

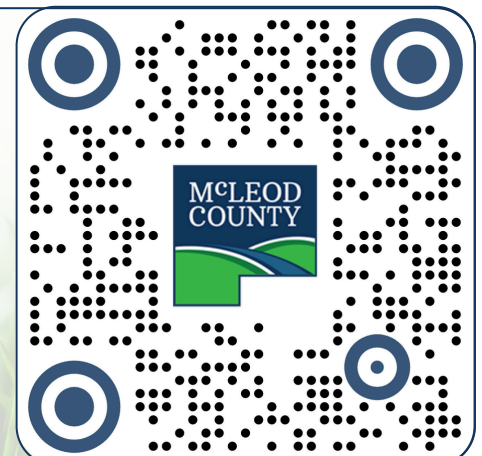
for questions about becoming a volunteer. For any other questions, call Dave Skoog at 320-582-3345, or email Ahc155@yahoo.com.

Visit www.thewallthathealshutchinson.com for more information about the The Wall That Heals in Hutchinson and volunteer opportunities.

Follow the path to meaningful work

Like the weather, life also changes seasons. If you or someone you know is looking for a new career, McLeod County has a variety of opportunities for people to grow with a role in public service.

Scan the QR code or visit www.mcleodcountymn.org.



Register early to save time while voting

Primary Election Day is August 13, 2024
General Election Day is November 5, 2024

Auditor-Treasurer

Connie M. Kurtzweg



Minnesota's next two election dates are coming up quickly, and voters are encouraged to register early to save time at the polling place. You will also need to update your registration if your name or address have changed.

To register to vote online or update your registration, visit mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/VoterRegistration/index

To verify your registration status, visit mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/voterstatuscheck/index

Pre-registration closes 21 days before each election. Voters who do not pre-register may still register at their polling place on Election Day.

To review the Office of the Secretary of State's website for elections and voting information, including information on Election Day voting, ballots, election results, secure and fair elections, data integrity, how elections work and how to get involved, visit sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/

These cities and townships will hold IN-PERSON elections at their precincts in 2024:

Brownton City, Glencoe City, Hutchinson City, Lester Prairie City, Silver Lake City, Stewart City, Winsted City, Acoma Township, Bergen Township, Collins Township, Glencoe Township, Hale Township, Hassan Valley Township, Helen Township, Hutchinson Township, Lynn Township, Penn Township, Rich Valley Township, Sumter Township, and Winsted Township.

These cities and townships will be MAIL-BALLOT precincts in 2024:

Biscay City, Plato City, and Round Grove Township. (All registered voters will be mailed a ballot)

How do I request an absentee ballot?

Visit mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/abrequest/index to apply for an absentee ballot any time during the year, except the day of the election. Allow time for election officials and the postal service to mail your ballot. Your returned ballot must be postmarked and received by the County on or before Election Day. Your ballot will not count if it is received after the deadline.

How do I track my ballot?

Visit mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/abstatus/index to track the status of your mail or absentee ballot to confirm its status (mailed, received, accepted). You must provide the same ID number (Minnesota Drivers License/State ID or last four digits of Social Security Number) that you provided on your absentee ballot application. You are able to separately attempt using each number if you are unclear which number you provided.

The Office of the Auditor-Treasurer works diligently to ensure that every vote is properly cast, counted and reported. We respect that Minnesota has consistently been a national leader in voter turnout and our paper ballot integrity. If you have any election questions, please call us at 320-864-1203

Who can vote?

To vote • you must be:

- A U.S. Citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day
- A resident of Minnesota for at least 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
- Not under a court order that revokes your right to vote

Supporting families and our future

McLeod County Child Support served more than 1,000 children this past year

August is Child Support Awareness Month, and McLeod County is committed to the well-being of children to ensure they receive financial, emotional, and other critical support from their parents.

Child support is money parents are court-ordered to pay their child's other parent or caregiver for support of their child. Support may be part of an interim, temporary, permanent, or modified court order in a divorce or legal separation, paternity action, order for protection, child custody action or separate child support action. This may include basic, medical and child care support.

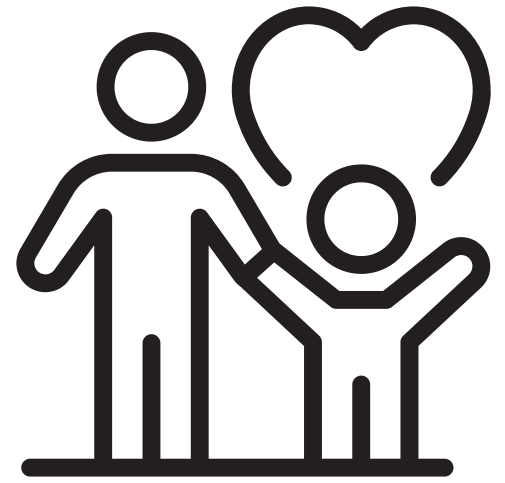
Child support cases open when either parent applies for McLeod County Child

Support services or when a county public assistance office refers a case.

McLeod County disbursed \$4,410,684 of child support in federal fiscal year 2023, which served 1,375 children in 1,020 cases.

We continue to perform above state averages in all categories measured and we do this with eight full-time employees. Cooperative agreements are initiated for resources outside of our agency, including county attorneys and Sheriff's Office personnel. For every \$1.00 spent on the child support program, we collected \$5.25 in support.

Child support payments come from multiple sources such as state tax intercepts,



federal tax intercepts, unemployment insurance, cash or check payments, other states and countries and income withholding.

If you or someone you know needs assistance collecting child support, call McLeod County Child Support at 320-864-3144, or email mcleod.childsupport@mcleodcountymn.gov. For more information, visit mcleodcountymn.gov.

County saw 107 injuries in 426 crashes

ZERO DEATHS from Page 2

"Everyone can set a good example for others by using their seat belt," Wawrzyniak said.

Statewide, the number of road fatalities – 413 in 2023 – fell slightly from 414 in 2022, and 458 in 2021. But those totals were a jump from a previous trend in the late 2010s and in 2020, when annual totals deaths numbered fewer than 400.

A dramatic rise in speeding

at the start of the pandemic in 2020 is largely to blame for the increase, state public safety officials say.

Tragically, four of the six people who died on McLeod County roads last year perished in three separate crashes along a short stretch of State Highway 7 west of Silver Lake. Wawrzyniak believes this is an anomaly.

"The state has gone to great lengths to improve safety on the stretch of Highway 7 in McLeod County and we have

seen the addition of passing lanes, bypass lanes, center-turn lanes, to name a few," he said.

One thing that engineering cannot control is personal behavior.

"As we have said many times over the last several years, slow down, pay attention to the road, wear your seat belt and drive sober," Wawrzyniak emphasized. "Following those rules greatly decreases your chances of being involved in a serious crash."



McLeod County Announcements

Upcoming office closures

McLeod County offices will be closed for Labor Day on Monday, **September 2, 2024**

Normal hours of operation will resume the following business day.



Get hitched at the McLeod County Fair!

Couples looking for a free and unique way to "tie the knot" can do so at the McLeod County Fair this year.

On Friday, August 16, and Saturday, August 17, First Judicial District Judges Maher and Winters will be at the Fair performing wedding ceremonies at no cost for couples.

To schedule a wedding or for more information, email mcleod.civilfamily@courts.state.mn.us; or call 320-864-1285 or 320-864-1284. Availability is limited, so schedule your wedding at the Fair today!

community spotlight

One cup helping many people

Common Cup celebrates 25th anniversary

McLeod County has many people with many needs. Since 1999, Common Cup Ministry has worked to meet those needs, whether they be financial, spiritual, emotional, or all of the above.

"It was started in Hutchinson by five churches that pooled their resources to help people in need throughout McLeod County," said Bev Bonte, Common Cup Director.

What started as a small group has grown to now include 31 churches from seven communities with one mission: "Gather and share spiritual and financial resources of area churches into one 'Common Cup' so that we may minister to those in need within McLeod County."

The larger the group has become, the more it's been asked to help.

"Our intention when we started Common Cup was just to help individuals and families," Bonte said. "But things have been requested of us, since it is a collaboration of community churches."

Common Cup and its programs help people of all ages, from elderly people on a fixed income in need of rental assistance, to young families in need of diapers or school supplies.

Common Cup is known for programs such as its Back to School Drive, diaper distributions; Laundry Love Program; PoPP, or Provisions of Personal Products, Program; Weekend Food distribution; Warm Coat distribution; Fare For All and more.

"If people know of a need or recognize something that we may not, we always want to hear about that as well," Bonte said.

Common Cup also assists people through a voucher system with which they can receive funds to pay for things such as short-term motel stays, rental assistance, eviction prevention, utility bills, vehicle fuel, and Trailblazer tokens.

"The Board does not want to build up coffers. We want to spend the money that people have given us," Bonte said.

Visit www.common-cup.org to learn more about Common Cup and how you can support its programs.

McLEOD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

McLeod County Government Center, 520 Chandler Ave N, Glencoe, MN 55336

Nathan Schmalz

nathan.schmalz@mcleodcountymn.gov

320-282-9647 — Lester Prairie, MN



DISTRICT ONE

City of Lester Prairie
City of Silver Lake
City of Winsted
Bergen Township
Hale Township
Winsted Township

Paul Wright

paul.wright@mcleodcountymn.gov

320-587-7332 — Hutchinson, MN



DISTRICT THREE

City of Hutchinson (SW)
City of Stewart
Collins Township
Lynn Township
Penn Township
Round Grove Township

Joe Nagel

joseph.nagel@mcleodcountymn.gov

320-296-1739 — Hutchinson, MN



DISTRICT FIVE

City of Hutchinson (NW)
Acoma Township
Hutchinson Township

Doug Krueger

doug.krueger@mcleodcountymn.gov

612-756-2855 — Glencoe, MN



DISTRICT TWO

City of Glencoe
City of Plato
Glencoe Township
Helen Township

Daryl Luthens

daryl.luthens@mcleodcountymn.gov

612-281-4840 — Hutchinson, MN



DISTRICT FOUR

City of Biscay
City of Brownton
City of Hutchinson (NE)
City of Hutchinson (SE)
Hassan Valley Township
Rich Valley Township
Sumter Township

Sheila Murphy

sheila.murphy@mcleodcountymn.gov

320-864-1320



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

McLeod County
Government Center
520 Chandler Ave N
Glencoe, MN 55336

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. JULY 2, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. JULY 16, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP | 9:00 A.M. JULY 30, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. AUGUST 6, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. AUGUST 20, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP | 9:00 A.M. SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

McLeod County Government Center



MCLEOD COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

520 CHANDLER AVENUE NORTH
GLENCOE, MINNESOTA 55336