



Lucette's Gazette

FALL 2025

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Cover Photo: Debbie Center



WELCOME TO THE
HACKENSACK LAKES AREA



Message from *Mayor Bill Kennedy*



Grab a hot apple cider, pumpkin spice latte, or a Hacktoberfest Beer and settle into fall. The leaves are falling, temps are cooling, and construction is coming to an end.

Hopefully, you were able to get out to the **Hackensack Chainsaw Event** to see the incredible carvings or have a **Lions Turkey Dinner**. Maybe you joined in the **Hacktoberfest**—wearing your lederhosen or dirndls, riding the hay wagon, Hammerschlagen, keg rolling, enjoying the food and festivities. **However you have been enjoying Hackensack, we hope you've had a great time doing so!**

Thank you for continuing to patronize our local businesses this summer. Without you, the businesses would have had a really hard time. What's next? Be sure to watch the **Hackensack Visitors Center** for upcoming activities. On **November 1st, at 7pm**, we will have the first ever 'Lucy's on the Loose' **Nighttime Glow Event** at **Lucette's Links Disc Golf Course**. Even if you don't play, come experience disc golf in the dark!

Upcoming Activities:

 **Hackensack Visitors Center**

"Lucy's on the Loose" Night Disc Golf:

 **Lucette's Links Disc Golf**



Consider Becoming a Chamber Member! By Kathy Meyer

While Chamber membership is often associated with businesses, individuals like you play a vital role in supporting the work we do to strengthen the **local economy, promote civic engagement, and build a thriving place to live, work, and grow.** Whether you're a resident, retiree, student, or simply someone who believes in supporting local progress, your support and involvement matter.

Why Join as an Individual Member?

- **Be Informed & Involved:** Stay connected to local initiatives and events. Join event committees or volunteer at community events.
- **Champion Good Causes:** Help fund and promote community-focused efforts in education, workforce development, small business support, and public policy.
- **Connect with Leaders:** Connect with community-minded individuals. Leaders and local professionals who share your passion for creating a better place to live and work.
- **Make an Impact:** Be a part of something bigger than yourself—advocate for a stronger, more connected, and inclusive community.

We'd like to invite you to become an **Individual Member of the Hackensack Chamber of Commerce**—and take part in shaping a stronger, more vibrant community!

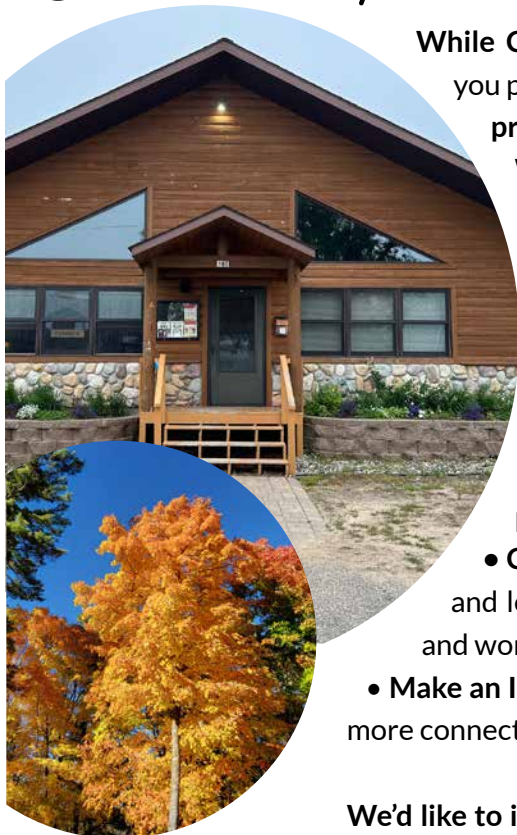


Photo by Betty Thomas

Connect with the Chamber  (218) 675-6135  chamber@hackensackchamber.com

100 Fleisher Ave, Hackensack (The Chamber office is located inside the **Hackensack Visitors Center**)

21st Annual Hackensack Chainsaw Event

By *Kathy Meyer*

The 21st Annual Hackensack Chainsaw Event, September 26-28, was a huge success, drawing over 2,200 attendees throughout the weekend. We welcomed 12 talented carvers from across the U.S., including two from Texas. While many are returning participants, we're always excited to introduce a few new faces each year. This year's two carving auctions raised over \$100,000—a record-breaking total! Proceeds are shared with the carvers, and the remaining funds benefit the City of Hackensack, Hackensack Lions Club, Hackensack American Legion Post 202, and the Hackensack Chamber of Commerce.

The highest-selling carving was created by Chad Danczyk and auctioned for \$4,250. His stunning work featured an eagle, fox, bear, owl, raccoon, and wolf—a beautiful tribute to the Northwoods and a clear favorite with the crowd. The always-popular All American Lumberjack Show brought high energy to the weekend with events like Log Boom Racing, Log Rolling, and X-Cut Sawing, complete with enthusiastic audience participation.



On Friday, we hosted local 5th and 6th grade students for a special educational day, offering a behind-the-scenes look at the art and skill of chainsaw carving.

This event could not happen without the dedication of our many volunteers, sponsors, carvers and guests—and we extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them. We also deeply appreciate the support of the local resorts who generously host our carvers throughout the weekend. We can't wait to see you again in 2026 which will be September 25-27!





Another season of the **Hackensack Farmer's Market** has come and gone with great success thanks to the **great community** of Hackensack! We can't express how grateful we are to have such wonderful support from everyone! We started out the season with our first market also hosting the Lending Library Trunk and Treasure Sale on the south end of the parking lot. That was quite a kickoff for the season. We added a few vendors for the market this year along with more vendors for our **Detour Days Sales** that we hosted **3 times this season**. We will not have the Detour Days Sales next year as the Sacred Heart Flea Markets will be up and running again next summer in the Catholic Church parking lot. The road construction detoured the traffic right past the Hub on First Street all summer, and **everyone worked together** and was extremely gracious in helping each other get set up and practicing safety first. As the season progressed we had some rainy weather which made **moving the market inside** very accommodating.



We host a table each week for a nonprofit. This helps local nonprofits to share their mission with people who might not know about them. If you are interested in having your nonprofit be at one of our markets next year, contact **Kathleen Vashro** at hubhackensack@gmail.com. We had our last market on Saturday, September 27, and it was wonderful to see so many people out enjoying the day! We served **soup and bread as a fundraiser** and sold out. All the vendors had a great day as well. For it only being our second year, we are very happy with all the repeat customers and new faces we have seen over the summer. We are already planning some exciting changes for the market for next year. The first market will be on **Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 9:00am-1:00pm**. The Hub will be hosting different events throughout the **fall and winter months** so be sure and check our Facebook page or contact the Hub via email to find out the list of current events.



Let's Make it *Snow* On 371

By Lynn VanAllen



Something magical is brewing in Hackensack. As the Highway 371 construction nears completion, the **Hackensack Game Changers 'Snowflake & Banners Team'** invites you to help transform the new corridor into a winter wonderland.

We're on a mission to **"make it snow"** with 48 glowing, LED-lit, 4-foot snowflakes and vibrant seasonal banners adorning the new lampposts. This isn't just decoration - it's a celebration of community pride, unity, and small-town charm.

The snowflakes, available in four styles, each costs just under \$500, is made in the USA, and comes with a 6-year warranty. Banners are under \$70 and available in two winter designs. You can donate as an individual, family, business, book club, church, lake association—or simply as a group of friends who love Hackensack. **Every contribution helps us light up 371** and show the world the **energy and love** that live here.

This volunteer-driven effort is led by the Hackensack Game Changers, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to **beautifying and rejuvenating our town**. We've endured the dust and disruption of construction—now let's celebrate with a corridor of light and magic that uplifts everyone who passes through.

Imagine driving through Hackensack this December, greeted by glowing snowflakes dancing in the crisp night air. **That's the vision. Let's build it together.**

Donations can be mailed to:

Hackensack Game Changers | P.O. Box 435 | Hackensack, MN 56452

Hackensack Game Changers 

Hackensack Housing Upgrade Grant Program

By Kris Biessener

Exciting news for local homeowners! **The Hackensack Local Housing Trust Fund (HLHTF)** has received a grant from **MN Housing** to launch a new initiative to help **year-round residents** improve their homes.



This program will be implemented by the **Resilient Housing Team** (of the Game Changers). Eligible homeowners can apply for grants to make repairs, upgrades, or modifications that support **safe living conditions or reduce energy costs**.

Each participating home will receive an energy audit or home inspection to identify areas needing improvement. The **Resilient Housing Team** will review, and homeowners with approved projects will then get quotes and select

licensed local contractors to carry out the work, **ensuring community dollars stay local**.

Common upgrades include insulation and weather stripping, furnace, water heater, or gas appliance repair/replacement, and window and door updates.

To qualify, applicants must be the owner and occupant of the home, have current homeowner's insurance, provide income documentation (must not exceed 115% of the State Median Income), be current on mortgage payments (if applicable), be current on property taxes, and agree to obtain **quotes from licensed local contractors**.

All grant funds will be distributed directly from the HLHTF to the selected vendors and subcontractors.

A **public meeting** will be held soon to introduce the program, answer questions, and distribute applications to interested residents. **Stay tuned for the date and location!**

Hackensack Game Changers 

Countryside Co-op, Then & Now *By Kathy Petersen*

Hackensack's Countryside Co-op, a buyer's club, founded in 1975, remains completely volunteer operated. Over time, the number of volunteers has been declining. More recently, board member volunteers have dwindled to 5 active directors, making the overall management of the store unsustainable. A full board consists of 9 directors. **A community and membership search was initiated this past summer, with an overwhelmingly positive response.**

A food buyer's club is a group of individuals who pool their purchasing power to buy food items in bulk directly from producers or wholesalers, **achieving lower prices and potentially reducing packaging and shipping.** Our co-op provides healthy food choices to our members, donates its products for events sponsored by local organizations, and passes its profits onto **5 area food shelves.** Its presence has become an invaluable asset to the community.

Over the summer, an **S.O.S. (Save our Store)** message, seeking board volunteers, was handed out to all members, as they visited the store. Newspaper articles

were placed in 3 local newspapers. There were approximately 40 inquiries, for both board members and regular volunteers. The board candidates were contacted by phone and vetted. Viable candidates were then invited to start training at the work stations and lead position. Three board positions were elected at our annual meeting in August, and 2 board members were appointed at our September board meeting. 10 new regular volunteers have been trained and are now working.

A full board of directors is now in place:

Kathy Petersen—President

Todd Maidl—Vice President

Lolene Jones—Secretary

Kathy Severson—Treasurer

Bob Litke, Lynne Owen, Ginny Petersen, Robin Sheprow, & Rolf Smeby—Directors

A sincere "thank you" is extended to both seasonal & permanent residents, for stepping up to keep our co-op an institution in our community!

Thank you To the Community from Northwoods Arts Council For Supporting our 2025 Summer Events! *By Sue Ready*

Lakeside Concerts saw large crowds with a different band playing each Friday night. This year's author event with TV personality Ron Schara was well attended with the added bonus appearance of Wayne and the Boys. The 30th Anniversary of the Northwoods Art and Book Festival had something for everyone. **65 artists and 35 authors** showcased their high quality award-winning work. A variety of **food and beverage vendors** and Pies by Guys provided many options for festival-goers, and local non-profits **volunteer staff** were available at different booths to share their work.

We look forward to another exciting year in 2026! Stay in touch for updates, and **consider joining** Northwoods Arts Council as there are lots of volunteer opportunities. Thank you!



Hackensack Unites to Tackle Highway 371 Reconstruction with

Creativity and Community Spirit

By Kris Biessener

To help **mitigate the impact** of the Highway 371 reconstruction project this summer, a dynamic new initiative was launched: **the Lane Changers team**. Spearheaded by Game Changers, this group brought together representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the HLACF, local business leaders, and several Game Changers board members. We were honored to welcome DeeDee LeMier, a MN Extension educator, whose insights added tremendous value to the effort.

Thanks to a **Boost Grant from Sourcewell**, the team kicked off a series of brainstorming sessions that led to the creation of “**Construction Lucette**,” a cheerful ambassador designed by Lindsay Lorenz to bring visibility and positivity to the project.

Recognizing that clear communication would be key, the team prioritized outreach. A **weekly email update** was launched in May and has since reached over 450 subscribers—including residents, tourists, and weekend visitors—garnering 100% positive feedback. These updates **provide timely information** on construction progress, detours, and business access, helping everyone navigate the changing landscape with ease. To further **support local businesses**, temporary signage was installed to guide customers to storefronts as access routes shifted. **Additional grants from the Initiative Foundation** are helping businesses refresh their curb appeal, with support for landscape design and parking lot striping for those affected by the reconstruction. Keep an eye out for more to come!



Young Excavating To Complete Highway Project

By Emma Clarke

Young Excavating is a heavy-highway and underground utility

contractor, located in Hackensack, MN. **Founded in 1975** by George and Shirley Young, Young Excavating is now owned and operated by their two sons, Jerry and Joel. Jerry began working alongside his father as a teen in 1986, and younger brother Joel followed suit in 2000. Long-time key employee and foreman, Todd Brooke, adds another 35 years of experience to our dedicated crew. Together, Jerry, Joel, and Todd have almost **100 years of combined experience in the road construction industry** and form the core leadership for the company.

For those who may not know, Young Excavating is **the prime contractor on the Highway 371 Reconstruction project**, to be completed by the end of October.

Smaller items are slated to be completed next year, with **minimal impact on traffic and local businesses**. Our professional and hardworking subcontractors have also been working diligently with us to keep this project on schedule, including several local

companies such as Interstate Traffic Signs (ITS) of Walker, Flying W Gardens of Park Rapids, and Anderson Brothers Construction of Brainerd. We are grateful to have spent a busy summer in our hometown, and want to thank **City Staff, MnDOT D2 Construction Staff, our subcontractors, as well as local residents and businesses**, for making this project a success.

Thank You! - The Young Excavating Team | YoungExcavating.com 





Grants Available

Photo by
Jeanne Blomme

Business owners along the 371 construction corridor can take advantage of a grant received through the Initiative Foundation. The Hackensack Game Changers applied to the Foundation for assistance in two areas for our businesses and churches:

1) Parking Areas: We can assist with striping of your parking lot. Hackensack Lumber & Hardware has offered to sell paint for striping at their cost. Rob Triplett will do the striping and will be paid through the grant.

2) Landscape & Design: Used for your business frontage. Arrangements are also being made to allow you to purchase shrubs and plantings at a discount.

This funding is available until May of next year. Since the funding is limited requests will be prioritized by request date. If you would like additional information please **contact Gary Dietrich**, member of the Hackensack Lane Changers at (612) 801-3345.

Note from the Editors

Thanks go out to everyone who contributed to another colorful and information-filled edition of **Lucette's Gazette**! The photos for the photo contest were again beautiful and brilliant, and we are very grateful to have received 22 submissions for this contest. As is typically the case, the decision for a winner was challenging, but this fall **Debbie Center takes the prize (a \$25 Rendezvous Brewing gift card) for her fall photo of a swan on a lake**, which graces the cover of this edition. Congratulations, Debbie! As you will notice, a lot of the newsletter highlights **progress on the huge city reconstruction project**, which is set to be completed by the end of October. **Thank you** to everyone who continued to visit and support Hackensack during this challenging summer, and who continue to support us and encourage us here in our community newsletter. **Enjoy the great articles and the fabulous photos!**

Photo
by Sue Toth
>



< Photo by
Linnea Dietrich

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Lucette's Gazette is a quarterly community newsletter covering news, updates, and events in our Hackensack Lakes area.

Thanks for reading!

