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"Preserving Our Past While Working On Our Future"

# Rothsay Regional Report

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## Lori Jorgenson Steps Down From City Council

By: Karen Carpenter

Giving something up that one has really enjoyed can be difficult. But when it feels right to step away and let someone else shoulder the responsibility, then the time is right.

That is how Lori Jorgenson is viewing her decision to step away from service on the Rothsay City Council.

Jorgenson has been part of the city government for just five days short of 24 years. She served first as city clerk and then as a council member.

"I just feel like it is time for fresh ideas and new people," said Jorgenson. "The time I have spent with city government has been phenomenal."

City service began for Jorgenson on January 9, 1995 when she took the position of Rothsay City Clerk.

For the most part, the clerk position is learned on the job. Jorgenson did attend city clerk institute for a three year course. She went one week a year, after which Jorgenson became certified as a city clerk.

"The city is run by the city clerk, stated Jorgenson. "It is a very important position.

"Lisa Zimmerman is doing a great job for the city as clerk," continued Jorgenson. Zimmerman began her duties in 2017.

Because Rothsay is situated smack dab on the line between two counties, things can become complicated. There are twice as many reports for the clerk to prepare. One report for Otter Tail County and another for Wilkin County.

Some rules and regulations are slightly different for each county as well. The city clerk has to be well versed on statues and guidelines of each county.

The city clerk is challenged to keep up on all the changes in laws all of the time. There are many



Lori Jorgenson is surrounded by the comforts of her home. She is looking forward to spending more time at home and with grandchildren as 2019 begins. Jorgenson did not run for re-election to the Rothsay City Council after serving six years. Before that Jorgenson held the position of Rothsay City Clerk for 18 years. Her knowledge of city government will be missed as the council moves forward.

requirements to keep the city running smoothly. Issuing building permits and sending out water bills are a couple of bigger tasks of the job.

What Jorgenson found rewarding about the clerk position was getting to know people and watching the town grow.

She enjoyed getting involved with other city clerks from around the region, many of whom became life-long friends.

"I felt like I was helping the city," commented Jorgenson. "I was dedicated and felt loyalty to the city. I still do, but just on a different level than when I was a clerk.

Jorgenson put in her resignation from the clerk position effective May 2, 2013. Five days later, on May 7, 2013, Jorgenson was sworn in as a city council member.

She was appointed to serve the remaining two years of Brandi Hansen's council term.

Hansen and Jorgenson essentially traded places. Hansen was hired as city clerk to replace Jorgenson. Hansen was clerk until January 2017.

"I knew a lot about the running of the city by the time I was appointed to council," Jorgenson said. It was an easy transition for her to step into the council role.

Jorgenson ran for council in 2014 for a full four-year term. She served for a total of six years until stepping down at the end of 2018.

The Rothsay City Council will lose a great deal of governmental expertise with Jorgenson's retirement.

She served on the Minnesota Association of Small Cities Board (MAOSC) for the last two years.

As a member of that board Jorgenson lobbied at the

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## Local Icon Ole & Lena's Closes After 12 Years

By: Karen Carpenter

During the last 12 years Ole & Lena's Pizzeria has become a destination spot. Many stop to eat while in the area for vacation. Locals have found it to be a great gathering spot.

All of that will come to an end on December 31, 2018. That is the last day of business for the area icon. Owner Shane Balken will be closing the doors of the eatery for the last time.

"I am getting tired, the restaurant business is tough," said Balken. "Also I have other business ventures where I want to put my energy."

The turnover in employees is one of the stressful things about running a food business. Training a new employee or stepping in when someone quits without notice takes a toll on the business operator.

Balken admits that his original plan was to close Ole & Lena's for a month or two at the beginning of the year and do some renovations to the building. The restaurant is located at 134 First Street SW in Rothsay.

Justin Matheson, Big J's SmokeHouse concession trailer owner, made an offer to buy the business.

"I wouldn't have closed Ole &

Lena's if the opportunity hadn't come up for another business to locate in the building," said Balken.

Matheson has been operating his traveling concession stand since June 1, 2016. He has become well known for his pulled pork and other delicacies in the surrounding area.

Matheson, a one time employee for Balken, built a smoker while in high school. He took culinary training at North Dakota State College Science

The building will officially change hands on February 1, 2019. Matheson will take some time to update and remodel the building. The new restaurant will feature the barbecued items he has become known for.

There will still be an opportunity for local folks to get a slice of Ole & Lena's pizza. Distributing the delectable frozen version of the pizza is one of the places where Balken will expend his energy in the future.

The frozen pizzas are available in 60 locations within 150 mile radius of Rothsay. Balken is hoping to expand into more sites.

Balken carefully chose a manufacturer who would use the exact ingredients and portions

for which Ole & Lena's pizza has become famous.

Randy's, located in Faribault, MN, turns out the frozen version of the pizza. Balken is the sales representative for the product.

The frozen pizza arm of the business started when Balken offered to provide frozen pizzas for school fundraisers in Rothsay and Breckenridge.

Response to the initial fundraising was successful and has continued to increase during the past three years.

Those summer vacationers and locals as well can still grab a hot slice of pizza from Balken's traveling concession trailer. He will be at many local events during the summer and fall.

"Operating the restaurant gave me a good perspective on business," commented Balken. "I learned what it takes to run a business in a small town. I went into the venture blind. I didn't know anything about the industry.

"At many points along the way I should have failed. It was the support of Rothsay and all of the surrounding towns that kept me going. I will be forever grateful for all of the support. In that respect it is

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Shane Balken, owner of Ole & Lena's Pizzeria in Rothsay has sold the restaurant. The pizzeria has drawn customers from around the region. Many summer visitors from around the country will miss the iconic pizza destination. The business closed on December 31. Justin Matheson, owner of Big J's SmokeHouse concession trailer, is purchasing the building and will open a restaurant in the future featuring his barbecue specialties.

## Snoball Week Is Set For January 14-18



It's that time of year again, as Rothsay students gear up for another busy Snoball week from January 14 to 18. Snoball royalty are, left to right - Jacob Christ, Nicholas Kusinerek, Cole Weets, Cora Honer, Rachel Brenden, and Rylee Rieken.

It will be filled with dress-up days, school activities, the crowning of the king and queen, and of course basketball. Senior royalty attendants up for queen include Cora Honer, Rylee Rieken, and Rachel Brenden. Senior royalty up for king include Jacob Christ, Cole Weets, and Nicholas Kusinerek. The rest of the Snoball court is rounded out by junior attendants Hannah Fisher and Isaac Fredrickson, sophomore attendants Lily Wheelright and Tresten Petersen, freshman attendants Abby Honer and Gage Johansen, and first grade attendants Anthony Montanari and Scarlett Sullivan.

To begin the weeks festivities, students will dress up as Tacky Tourists, and play some fun games of basketball during seventh period. That night, the Rothsay Girls Basketball Team will play Ulen-Hitterdal at the Bill Rose Gymnasium.

On Tuesday, a pep fest will be held, and students will show their school spirit by sporting blue and gold and wearing Tiger gear. The Rothsay Boys Basketball team will then play against the Battle Lake Battlers in Rothsay.

On Wednesday, students will have the opportunity to dress up as their favorite superheroes and supervillains. At the end of the day, students will do a scavenger hunt, followed by trivia.

Thursday, students will dress up as senior citizens. The junior high classes will put on the musical "Paintin' the Fence", which tells the story of Tom Sawyer. At night, the girls will take on the Parkers Prairie Panthers. When asked about the games going on during Snoball week, senior Jenny Collins said, "I'm look forward to playing two strong teams and helping cheer on the boys."

To wrap up Snoball week, the king and queen will be chosen during the Coronation ceremony at 2:30 and the boys basketball team will play Hillcrest at the Rose Gymnasium. "It's always fun playing a conference rival. We matchup pretty good and it should be a good game to watch so come out and pack the Rose," said senior Parker Keep. Snoball week should be filled with lots of fun, excitement, and good basketball. The Farmers State Bank is hoping everyone will come out to support the Tigers on Friday, the 18th for the basketball game. They are paying all admission fees for both Rothsay and the Hillcrest fans.