

Summer Event Schedule  
Returning To Normal



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following the rodeo performances. Other events include a city parade, beer garden and food court, kiddie pedal pull, a petting zoo, bingo and a horseshoe tournament.

As the summer begins to wind down way too soon, there are a couple of long running festivals that are coming back after a one-year interruption caused by the coronavirus. The popular Potato Days in Barnesville will round out August on Friday and Saturday, August 27 and 28. That event will draw between 20,000 and 30,000 visitors to Barnesville during its two-day run.

Potato Days had been on the tentative chopping block for a second year as a lack of information from the governor’s office made planning impossible.

There was finally a meeting of the minds at a special meeting of volunteers on Wednesday, May 12. At that meeting it was finally decided that the popular festival would move forward again on Friday and Saturday, August 27-28 with some modifications.

Scratched from this year’s activities were close contact events. The mashed potato wrestling is gone from the program at least for this year. The inflatables for kids are hanging in the balance and may not make the cut this year but will be back when there is less concern about personal contact.

REGIONAL REPORT

Rothsay, Minn.  
2021 May  
Edition

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Events that are definitely coming back are the food court, everyone’s favorite. The 5K and 10K road races and hike around Blue Eagle Lake will be held. The potato picking, potato peeling, strongman competition, parade, street dance and the huge classic car show in McGrath Park on Saturday as well as the downtown craft fair are all returning.

Potato Days Executive Director Theresa Olson had this to say about the recent decision. “WE’RE BACK! . . . We are excited to announce that we are officially underway with the Potato Days 2021 festival. We’ve waited a long time to make the decision to move forward. The safety and health of our guests is our top priority moving forward.

“Some events may look different as we socially distance but we’re excited to bring back some normalcy to life in August in Minnesota and Barnesville in particular.

“We are also excited to be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the most recent Potato Days this year. So mark calendars, follow us in the newspaper and on social media for updates as we start to do some rush planning. Or you can contact us at [spudlady@potatodays.com](mailto:spudlady@potatodays.com) with any questions,” Olson concluded.

The Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion at Rollag will officially usher out summer. That is the largest summer event in the entire region, drawing tens of thousands of visitors to tiny Rollag for the four-day event.

The WMSTR event is always held Labor Day weekend. This year those dates fall on Friday, September 3 through Labor Day Monday, September 6. Come on out and get a little dirt and chaff in your shirt.

Kenzie Lankow  
Graduates From  
MSU Mankato

Minnesota State University, Mankato celebrated its 2021 spring semester student commencement by providing graduates commencement-in-a-box packages and personalized photo opportunities on a graduation stage while holding a virtual ceremony and launched a special website.

Kenzie Lankow graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree. Kenzie is a 2018 graduate of Rothsay High School and the daughter of Glenn and Tammy Lankow.

The three traditional commencement ceremonies scheduled were cancelled in March because of the COVID-10 pandemic. However, graduates were invited to take part in a “graduate walk,” an in-person professional photo opportunity on campus May 3-5, in the Centennial Student Union Ballroom to celebrate with their guests.

The commencement-in-a-box packages were presented to graduates after their graduate walk or were shipped to graduates. Included inside the purple-and-gold branded boxes were a diploma cover, two commencement programs, small branded gifts for the graduates and a personalized note.

Food Pantry  
Available For  
Those In Need

The Barnesville Area Food Pantry is open and staffed with volunteers each Monday from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Persons who may be in need of food, and other household necessities, are invited to come in for assistance during those hours or call at 701 340-8324.

The Food Pantry serves residents for Barnesville, Rothsay, Baker, Rollag and surrounding rural areas. Located just north of the library on Front Street (look for the green building).

For emergency assistance or more information 701 340-8324.

Walz Sets End Dates For  
COVID-19 Mandates

With Minnesota’s population now over 60% vaccinated, coronavirus hospitalizations and deaths declining and public sentiment demanding a loosening of controls, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz has announced that he is stepping back from some COVID-19 restrictions. He also set dates certain when businesses and activities can reopen at full occupancy. Those actions signal that the end of the coronavirus pandemic is in sight or at least under control.

“It’s been a long journey but we did the things that needed to be done,” Walz said in prepared remarks about winding down his coronavirus restrictions. Some of those restrictions have been in place since March of 2020. “The job is not done until it’s done, but the plan to finish it is on us now,” the governor continued.

At the same time he announced the loosening of restrictions, he also expressed a plea to all Minnesotans to get vaccinated with their COVID-19 shots. “You need to help Minnesota now,” Walz said to the adults in the state who have still not been vaccinated.

Highlighted in the governor’s announcement are three key dates that will see the restrictions gradually being lifted.

\* FRIDAY, MAY 7 -- The state removed the limits for outdoor dining and outdoor events such as fairs, festivals and parades. The mask mandate outdoors was lifted except at venues with over 500 people in attendance. Pandemic mandated closing times for bars, restaurants and gathering spaces was lifted.

\* FRIDAY, MAY 28 -- Any and all remaining outdoor limits and indoor activity restrictions were ended.

\* THURSDAY, JULY 1 -- The mask wearing mandate imposed by the state will end. It could end sooner than that if 70% of the state’s population has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Currently the inoculated population stands at about 60% so we’re close.

While most of the mandates and

Area M State  
Students  
Graduate

The following area students are among the 700 2021 Spring Semester graduates of Minnesota State Community and Technical College, with campuses in Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Moorhead and Wadena.

- Amanda Aaberg, Accounting Transfer Pathway - Associate of Science
- Susan Carrillo, Health Information Tech/Coding - Associate of Applied Science
- Natalie Vogel, Liberal Arts and Sciences - Associate of Arts

MN Jr. Duck Stamp Contest  
Artwork On Display

For a limited time, patrons to the Fergus Falls Public Library can enjoy viewing winning kindergarten through 12th grade artwork from around the state recognized in the annual Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp contest.

First, second, and third place pieces are now on display as well as local honorable mentions for each grade level grouping: kindergarten through second grades, third through fifth grades, sixth through ninth grades, and 10th through 12th grades. Several local students are featured from Piekarski Homeschool and the Prairie Science Class-Cleveland Elementary-Kennedy Secondary School including:

Trinity Piekarski, Brynn Blondeau, Mylie Piekarski, Trygvie Ronnevik, Olivia Bernstetter, Elsa Retzlaff, Samreen Chahal, Kara Morales, Cooper Miller, Dakota Dewey, Maliya Johnson, Havilah McConn, Lydia Uggerud, Lucas Formo, Alana Higbee, Evelyn Meldahl, Sullivan Rufer, Leo Schierer, Anna Sem, Jonah Gullickson, Emma Hust-O’Meara, Violet McConn, Mia Olson, Brooke Swenberg, Adrian Blondeau, and Holly Gutzmer.

The Minnesota conservation message winner is Evelyn Wedll, age 10, of Fergus Falls, with her statement, “Can you think about life without water? Neither can ducks!



MINNESOTA GOVERNOR  
TIM WALZ

restrictions have been lifted, some will still remain in place. included in the list of remaining mandates is an eviction moratorium and a “price gouging ban”.

Local governments, private businesses and offices have been allowed to extend their own masking and social distancing directives as they see fit in their own individual circumstances.

The lifting of the restrictions was greeted by a gigantic sigh of relief from the bar and food industry that have been particularly hard hit by the restrictions. Also breathing a little easier are those individuals planning for summer festivals. The loosening of restrictions may also mean the return of traveling national music shows.

The loosening of restrictions also means that Wally the Beerman and Harry the Hotdog Vendor can now go back to work at the Twins games after a year off. Fans in the stands at major events will be a sight not seen since last November.

Governor Walz’s mandated restrictions on activities and travel were and remain controversial. The Republicans, which control one branch of the Minnesota legislature wanted restrictions and businesses open much sooner than Walz was willing to relinquish control.

There were even members of his own party that voted against him retaining executive powers for as long as he did. The Democrats main objection was that Walz was painting the entire state with a big, broad brush. There have been claims, probably legitimate, that the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area should be treated differently than the much less densely populated outstate areas.

As far as being restrictive, Minnesota likely fell somewhere in the middle of the pack as far as states putting mandates on residents. North Dakota required no restraints early in the coronavirus outbreak. As numbers spiked, some restrictions such as masks and large assemblies of people were banned. North Dakota lifted all mandates several months ago. South Dakota never imposed any mandates or restrictions.

Making judgements on a national scale is even more problematic. The two leaders as far as cases, hospitalizations and deaths are California and New York. Michigan has also been very restrictive with their efforts to curb the virus. All three states are still imposing restrictions yet the virus remains unchecked in those states.

On the other hand, Texas and Florida are examples of states that imposed few restrictions and for only very limited amounts of time. Those states saw huge spikes in the number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths. But after those spikes the numbers came down, way down. Both states have been open without restrictions for several months and their numbers continue to decline.

The cause and effect of COVID-19 will be discussed and the mandates placed on citizens will be debated for years, even decades to come. The virus outbreak will eventually become an item of intense medical study just as the Spanish flu outbreak of 1918 and 1919 is debated and studied even today. Some diseases seem to be smarter than the people they inflict.

Program Seeks  
To Support  
Entrepreneurs



Initiators Fellowship

Enterprise for Good in Greater Minnesota  
Imagine owning a business that is profitable and benefits your community or environment.

Now imagine getting the resources to make those dreams a reality.

The Initiators Fellowship is a two-year program that offers early-stage entrepreneurs the tools to build their for-profit or nonprofit social enterprise businesses.

So, what is a “social enterprise?”

A social enterprise venture is defined as a business project that addresses a basic unmet need or solves a social or environmental problem using a market-driven approach. In other words, creating a business that benefits society.

Beginning its third cohort this year, the Initiators Fellowship follows a competitive selection process. Eight Fellows or fewer receive training, mentorship and guidance, and \$30,000 annually for two years.

The Initiators Fellowship is made possible by the Granite Equity Partners, an original funding partner, and the Bush Foundation.

The application opens May 24. Learn more at [wcif.org](http://wcif.org).

JUNE 9-12

Happy Harry's RIBFEST

FARGODOME

RAIN OR SHINE

CHEVROLET

HEARTLAND CHEVY DEALERS

Happy Harry's BOTTLE SHOPS

SHINER BEERS

THOR BUILDINGS

HotSpring POOL TABLES

THE MOD CANNA

Twisted Tea

BUD LIGHT SELTZER LEMONADE

ZULAUF CONSTRUCTION

DAKOTA MAGIC CASINO • HOTEL

SCAN ME

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Sparklight

bite squad THE OFFICIAL DELIVERY PARTNER

MARVIN

ALL CONCERTS INCLUDED WITH YOUR \$5 GATE ADMISSION

WARRANT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9

John Michael Montgomery

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

FRIDAY, JUNE 11

DYLAN SCOTT

SATURDAY, JUNE 12