

Positioning students for their futures

Submitted by Superintendent Tomas Loberg

In less than one month, Goodridge Public School residents will decide whether to invest in making critical improvements to the district's facility. The goal of the single-question ballot is to best position students for their futures — ultimately, moving Goodridge Forward. The \$21.35 million plan focuses on:

- Providing hands-on learning opportunities: Many students, both in Goodridge and across the nation, choose to enter the workforce instead of postsecondary education. Expanding the existing space, which currently only has enough space for woodworking, will provide programming space for other hands-on learning opportunities, including metals, small engines, welding, and robotics — all of which are highly in-demand careers.

- Addressing key facility updates: The district's single steam boiler is 80 years old and is far beyond its useful life, and the rest of the building has limited or no ventilation. Updating the school's building systems to code is the best long-term solution. Many of the building's plumbing systems are inadequate, and some lack proper handicap accessibility. If approved, a dedicated

secure entrance would be created to limit public access points during school hours and would relocate the district office near this point to further enhance security.

- Providing adequate educational spaces: The district has used all available space throughout the building, including spaces not originally designed as classrooms. As enrollment grows, limited space will continue to create obstacles for student learning. If approved, various areas would be renovated, including Special Education, the media center, the FACS room, the science lab, and more.

IMPORTANT VOTING UPDATE: There are three ways for residents to cast their vote — 1) absentee by mail, 2) absentee in person, or 3) in person on Election Day.

To vote absentee by mail, district residents may call the Pennington County Auditor-Treasurer's Office at 218-683-7022.

To vote absentee in person, district residents can visit the Auditor-Treasurer's Office in Thief River Falls during normal business hours or during its extended absentee hours. Extended voting hours include Saturday, Nov. 4 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. and Monday, Nov. 6, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Residents can now vote absentee by mail or in person

through Monday, Nov. 6.

To vote in person on Election Day, all residents will vote at the Goodridge Senior Center, 307 Vaughn Main St, E. in Goodridge. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 7. For updated voting information, visit GoodridgeForward.org/vote.

A \$100,000 residential home in the district would see an estimated tax impact of approximately \$35 per month starting in 2024. The estimated tax impact on an acre of agricultural homestead property valued at \$2,500 per acre is \$2.21 annually or \$0.18 per month. If approved, the State of Minnesota's Ag2School tax credits will pay for approximately 60% of the project's total debt service payments, ultimately lowering the tax impact for agricultural landowners without adding additional tax impact for non-agricultural landowners. Residents can find their estimated tax impact by visiting GoodridgeForward.org/cost.

If you have any questions or feedback about the referendum, residents can contact Superintendent Tomas Loberg by email at tomas.loberg@goodridgeisd561.org or by phone at 218-378-4134.

For complete information about the bond referendum, visit GoodridgeForward.org.