

# Lake Country Lure

**Business Buzz**  
 Advocate The Maple Lake MESSENGER

## Spooky Brew Coffee Company



Pictured above is Brandan Hoon, owner of Spooky Brew, this year's Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year.

### MAPLE LAKE 2026 BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



By Brenda Erdahl

Brandan Hoon has always loved coffee, but it took a pandemic to realize just how much.

He was running his parents' shop New Uses in Maple Grove when Covid hit. The shop closed and he found himself with idle hands.

He had been to Key West recently and experienced the best coffee he'd ever tasted at a little place called the Cuban Coffee Queen. With that experience fresh in his mind and nothing much else to do, he decided to try his hand at brewing his own coffee. He didn't have any fancy equipment, but he did have a popcorn popper so that's what he used. His brew, which he dubbed Spooky Brew, turned out so well he started selling it at Buffalo's Farmer's Market.

In 2022 he and his wife Erin bought Irish Blessings located at the historic "Red House" on Oak Avenue in Maple Lake. In 2025 he moved his shop to

downtown Maple Lake and has attracted such a large following of customers that parking has become an issue.

Earlier this month, Hoon was recognized for his contributions to the community with the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award.

"I don't do this for the reward and didn't focus on that, so I was kind of taken aback," Hoon said of the honor. "It's been an exciting journey going from a small house to downtown and filling up the parking. I'm very thankful to this town, everyone has been so supportive."

The Business of the Year award honors a local business that has excelled in growth and support for the community. The business must be an active chamber member that promotes community events and encourages community involvement.

Besides bringing one-of-a-kind coffee, sandwiches and ice cream to town, Hoon has been known to host fun events

- Continued on page 2

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## MAPLE LAKE 2026 BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



like live music during downtown festivals. For two years he chaired Christmas in Maple Lake for the chamber and was instrumental in designing the logo for the chamber's newest event, the Snow Machine Rendezvous and Ride.

His new downtown shop has a large kitchen that has allowed him to expand his food menu, particularly his sandwiches. Two crowd favorites are his breakfast sandwiches, the Monster Melt and BAT Bagels. BAT stands for Bacon, Avocado and Tomato.

The shop's ice cream bar is a hit as well, offering 12 flavors, up to three scoops to mix and match, plus they have malts and shakes.

In addition to a larger kitchen, the new space offers room to grind his one-of-a-kind coffee, and just as importantly, room for people to sit and enjoy their food and drink. A line of booths occupies the south wall with room left for half-a-dozen tables or you can belly up to the bar. A comfy nook well-lit by the large main street windows is always a comfortable spot, especially in the winter when the sun shines warmly.

Scott Chantland is responsible for the shop's unique look. He also re-did King's 46 Wine Bar next door and the 1918 Barbershop just down the street. All have a nostalgic air that gives the businesses a homey, comfortable atmosphere.

Hoon thanked everybody in the community who has offered their support over the years.

"I've always been a coffee drinker, but never in my life did I think I'd do this. I want to thank the community for its support, for showing up and helping me to live my dream," he said.

Interestingly, the coffeehouse got its start downtown on Birch Avenue in 2000 when Shelly Karja and Chris Blade opened Heavenly Grounds. The coffeehouse was christened Irish Blessings by the Elsenpeters and Hollises in July of 2005. In 2011 new owners Chris and Natalie McClory moved it to the historic "Red House" on Oak Avenue and made a successful business that included weekly outdoor entertainment and food trucks during the summer. Now that it's back on Birch Avenue, the business has come full circle.



Spooky Brew has drawn many new faces to downtown Maple Lake thanks to its special coffee that is roasted and brewed in house, sandwiches and unique environment.



Spooky Brew drew a large crowd to its open house in July, pictured above, and it continues to bring customers in from all over the area.



Linda Rassat was nominated and selected as this year's Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award recipient.

## Linda Rassat

## MAPLE LAKE 2026 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

By Brenda Erdahl

Linda Rassat has never hesitated to step up when needed. If someone makes a call for help, she answers it.

She was one of the many volunteers to make the city's Days of Old celebration a success. When that ended and the Gear-Head Get Together began, she was involved in that too. She's an active member of the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce, donates her time to Makers and Growers and serves on the Maple Lake Library Board. In short, she's a model of self-sacrifice in the community. It's no wonder Rassat was chosen as this year's Community Service Award recipient.

This Chamber of Commerce award is presented each year to a Maple Lake resident for their record of outstanding service to the community and their accomplishments are celebrated as a part of the St. Patrick's Day festivities.

Rassat said she was "truly, truly surprised" to be chosen for the award and stressed that the success of any endeavor she has been a part of is the result of numerous hands at work.

"When you have several people working together, it makes big jobs into small jobs," she said.

Rassat is most proud of her work with the Irish Gala and Gear-Head Get Together.

Although the Gala is no more, the Get Together is going strong and growing.

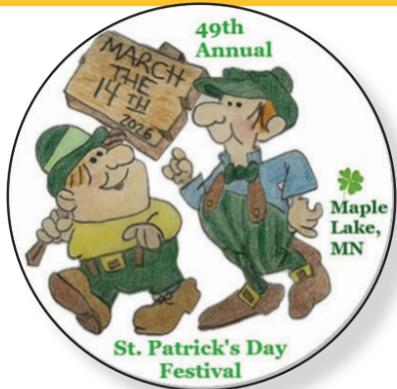
"It's amazing how it's grown, pretty soon it's going to outgrow the town," she said. "It gives a sense of accomplishment being part of that team, because it wouldn't have been possible without many others."

Volunteering can be a great joy, she said, and it's easy to get involved.

"You can give as little or as much as you have time for," she said.

# Maple Lake 49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL St. Patrick's Day

## 2026 PARADE PROGRAM & LINE-UP



### 2026 BUTTON

Winning Design by  
Scott Dumphy



### GRAND MARSHALS

Al & Julie Hudek



**PARADE DAY IS HERE!** A fun-filled day of events has been planned for Saturday, March 14. Stick around after the parade and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with some live music and take in the Irish atmosphere at one of the local watering holes. See Page 2 for dates and time of some of the events planned for Parade Day.

**Live Music**  
"Good Question"  
7:30 - Midnight

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# MAPLE LAKE'S 49TH ANNUAL St. Patrick's Day Parade **EVENTS**



## Irish Scamper

11:00 a.m.

Downtown Maple Lake

Registration 9 a.m.  
Maple Lake High School  
raceberryjam.com



## Grande Day Parade

1:30 p.m.

(line-up at 12:30 p.m.)



## Royalty Coronation

5:30 p.m.

Maple Lake High School



## Craft Sale

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Maple Lake  
Elementary School



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# 2026 ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE LINE-UP



**#1 - Wright County Sheriff Deringer**  
Wright County Sheriff Deringer

**#2 - American Legion Post 131**  
Maple Lake American Legion Post #131

**#3 - VFW Post 7664**  
VFW Post 7664

**#4 - Lake Mary VFW Post 9232**  
Lake Mary VFW from Victor Township outside Winsted

**#5 - VFW Post 1901**  
Wright County VFW Post 1901 of Montrose MN

**#6 - Wat-Kim-Valley POW/MIA**  
The Wat-Kim-Valley POW/MIA veterans have made a commitment to never let any POW/MIA be forgotten. These men

have been marching together since 1985 with the purpose of bringing awareness to the fact that there are many veterans from past wars that have not been accounted for. Every year there are remains recovered from past wars and those remains are identified and sent home to have a proper burial and give their families closure. These men marching today have been a part of our parade for well over 30 years and we thank them for their service.

**#7 - The Clearwater Legion Riders**  
The Clearwater Legion Riders

**#8 - Maple Lake Fire Department**  
The Maple Lake Fire Department

**#9 - Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce**  
The 2026 Maple Lake St Patrick's Day parade is sponsored by the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce

**#10 - Freedom Flight - The POW/MIA Hot Air Balloon Team**  
We are Freedom Flight, the POW/MIA Hot Air Balloon Team. We fly our balloons to bring awareness to the 80,000 service members since WWII who have never returned home, never been identified and for their families who have never had closure with their family members who served in our Armed Forces.

**#11 - City of Maple Lake**  
The Mayor and Council welcomes everyone to the 49th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade! Truck is driven by a member of our fabulous City Maintenance Department - who we'd like to thank for working tirelessly to prepare the town for this event. We invite you to visit Maple Lake again this summer for the monthly Makers & Growers events and Gear Head Get Together in August!



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# 2026 ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE LINE-UP



## #12 - Grand Marshals

The 2026 Grand Marshals, Al & Julie Hudek. They both have committed to their community and have been an integral part of Maple Lake!

## #13- Minneapolis Aquatennial Ambassadors

The Minneapolis Aquatennial has finished celebrating its 86th year. Festival founders selected the 3rd week in July because this week has the best weather on record for the year. The Aquatennial Ambassador Organization exists to inspire young Minnesota women to achieve extraordinary futures by providing professional development opportunities through networking and mentoring. The ambassadors travel throughout the state of Minnesota and the country. Our organization also provides educational scholarships to our ambassadors to help them reach their goals. The 2026 Crew is thrilled to be celebrating in your community today. Join them the 3rd week in July for the 87th Aquatennial!

## #14 - St. Paul Winter Carnival Junior Royalty

The St. Paul Winter Carnival Junior Royalty is just a part of the 140 year old tradition

of the St. Paul Winter Carnival. The Junior Royalty program dates back to the 1940s and has invited young men and women to serve in the royal court each year as goodwill ambassadors from the Winter Carnival to our neighboring communities. The Junior Court makes about 75 appearances throughout the year while learning public speaking skills, interpersonal skills, and serving the community in various service projects. Please welcome the 2026 Junior Royalty Court!

## #15 - Maple Lake Royalty

2025-2026 Maple Lake Royalty, Miss Maple Lake Ellie, Maple Lake Princess Kalli, Maple Lake Jr Princess Layla, Maple Lake Jr Princess McKinlie, Little Miss Maple Lake Braelyn and Little Miss Maple Lake Harlyn. Thanks for celebrating with us today!

## #16 - Maple Lake Royalty Candidate-Avery

Maple Lake Jr Princess Candidate Avery Rekstad. Avery is sponsored by Apex Industrial Solutions Inc. Best of luck Avery at coronation tonight!

## #17 - Maple Lake Royalty Candidate-Emery

Maple Lake Jr Princess Candidate Emery

**Maple Lake Royalty 2026** Give float 15 a round of applause for serving our community well over the last year. Thank you for representing Maple Lake. Come watch them say goodbye at tonight's coronation at 5:30 at the Maple Lake High School. and view the next page for candidates in 2026!

Lemm. Emery is sponsored by Lucky Charms Childcare and Preschool. Good luck at coronation tonight Emery.

## #18 - Maple Lake Royalty Candidate-Hazel

Little Miss Maple Lake Candidate Hazel Krueger. Hazel is Sponsored by IntegriPrint inc. Good luck tonight at coronation Hazel.

## #19 - Maple Lake Royalty Candidate-Lindsey

Maple Lake Jr Princess Candidate Lindsey Kempenich. Lindsey is Sponsored by 1 Layer Technologies. Good luck to you Lindsey tonight at coronation.

## #20 - Maple Lake Royalty Candidate-Nora

Little Miss Maple Lake Candidate Nora Speetzen. Nora is sponsored by BNC Heating and Cooling and the Wadsten Real Estate Group-Edina Realty. Good luck tonight at coronation Nora.

## #21 - Lucky Charms Childcare & Preschool

Lucky Charms Childcare & Preschool is a

privately owned childcare center in Maple Lake, open 6:00a.m. - 6:00p.m. Mon-Fri., serving children 6 weeks to 12 years. They provide a safe, nurturing, home-like environment that supports learning, imagination, and each families individual needs.

## #22 - Annandale Ambassadors

Happy St Patrick's day Maple Lake! Make sure to join the Annandale Ambassadors for their 137th July 4th celebration this year!

## #23 - Gear Head Get Together

A gathering of gear-heads and their machines takes place on these same streets 152 days from today! Bring your cars, trucks, hot rods, boat motors, motorcycles, tractors, snow-machines, lawn mowers and other mechanical devices to the Annual Gear-Head Get Together on the 3rd Saturday in August. This years get-together is the 15th Annual event on the 15th of August!

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# Questions AND Answers

## Maple Lake Royalty - 2026



### Emery Lemm

Junior Princess Candidate

Parents: Lindsey and Sam Torgerson

Favorite color: pink & white

Favorite St Patrick's Day event: parade

Favorite outside activity: bonfires

*"I want to represent Maple Lake so that Maple Lake can become a better place."*



### Lindsey Kempenich

Junior Princess Candidate

Parents: Todd and Tiffany Kempenich

Favorite color: blue or green

Favorite St Patrick's Day event: parade

Favorite outside activity: running

*"I want to represent Maple Lake because I really like the school, town and people. And I want to share that with others."*

### Hazel Krueger

Little Miss Candidate

Parents: Shannon and Kevin Krueger

Favorite color: pink

Favorite St Patrick's Day event: parade

Favorite outside activity: playing in the snow



*"I want to represent Maple Lake so I can meet new people at parades."*



### Nora Speetzen

Little Miss Candidate

Parents: Steven and Amanda Speetzen

Favorite color: pink

Favorite St Patrick's Day event: parade

Favorite outside activity: going on the swings

*"I want to represent Maple Lake because it looks like a fun experience".*



*"I want to represent Maple Lake because it's a small and friendly town that I have great friends in."*



### Avery Rekstad

Junior Princess Candidate

Parents: Skylar and Christy Rekstad

Favorite color: Caribbean Teal

Favorite St Patrick's Day event: parade

Favorite outside activity: tag or playing at the park.

Open to the Public at Maple Lake High School Auditorium

5:30 p.m Doors open at 5:00

Admission at Door \$7.00

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CORONATION CANDIDATES

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MAPLE LAKE CANDIDATES

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**#24 - 29th Annual St. Timothy's School Spring Dinner and Auction**

St. Timothy's Students are seen with their 2026 Spring Dinner & Auction Grand Prize Raffle a 2026 Can-Am Defender HD9 XT Side by Side. You could WIN this Side by Side or \$15,000 Cash!! Join them on Saturday, May 2nd at the V in Maple Lake for their 2026 Spring Dinner & Auction - Lumberjack Bash. You can buy raffle tickets from school families or at the Parish or School Offices. Stop by St. Timothy's School for a tour to experience a family atmosphere of faith and academic excellence.



**#25 - Monticello Royal Ambassadors**

Located right off I-94, Monticello is nestled along the beautiful banks of the Mississippi River. Whether you come for the restaurants, retail, or recreation, Monticello has something for everyone. Ambassadors Avarie, Ella, and Lily invite you to Monticello Riverfest, held July 10th through 12th.

**#26 - Albertville Royalty Program**

Let us welcome our friends from the Albertville Royalty Program celebrating Albertville Friendly City Days along with 50 years of their program. In keeping with the luck of the Irish and their tie to their rich history they are dressed today to represent Lucky Charms a costume that made it's debut during this parade in 2013. Let us make welcome Miss Albertville Claire, Albertville Princesses Audrey and Chloe, along with Jr Misses Ariella (R-E-Ella), Lenora (len- nora), Koriauna (Cory-On-A), and Scarlett. The Albertville Royal Family invites you to join them for Friendly City Days June 10th - 14th 2026.

**#27 - Delano Royalty Float**

The Delano Royalty proudly represents the community of Delano and the Delano 4th of July Celebration! 2025-26 Ambassadors Hailey, Bella, Isabella, Ellie & Brooklynn are feeling the Luck of the Irish and are excited to be a part of the Maple Lake St. Patrick's Day Parade!

**#28 - Husky Huddle & Malamute Mingle**

Calling all northern breed lovers! Join our Facebook group Husky Huddle & Malamute Mingle! Whether your husky is a howling drama queen, a professional escape artist, or professional cuddler, this is the place for you! Join us for tips, tricks, stories, photo sharing, & husky get togethers all throughout Minnesota!

**#29 - Wright County Dairy Royalty**

Wright County Dairy Princesses and Ambassadors would like to wish you all a

happy St. Patrick's Day and remind you to enjoy your 3 servings of dairy every day. Because whether you scoop it, pour it, or shred it. It's undeniably dairy.

**#30 - Buffalo Royal Ambassadors**

Irish blessings from the royal ambassadors of neighboring Buffalo. Miss Buffalo Erika and Princess Ameira are excited to participate in all that is Irish in Maple Lake today. Please join us the 2nd weekend in June for Buffalo Days!

**#31 - Big Lake Ambassadors**

The Big Lake Ambassadors invite you to join us at spud fest, June 25th-28th 2026

**#32 - Legacy FC**

Legacy Football Club in Wright County

**#33 - Driven Electric**

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ty, and respect for our clients' time and investment. Our mission is to provide safe, efficient electrical work while contributing to successful, well-run projects from start to finish.

**#34 - Lester Prairie Ambassadors**

We are the Lester Prairie Ambassadors and would love for you to join us July 17th & 18th, 2026

**#35 - St. Michael Royalty**

2025-2026 St. Michael Royal Court: Queen- Robyn Beck; Princesses- Faith Krajsa & Naomi Cheney; Little Misses - Kennedy Nagen & Cecilia Gauthie

**#36 - Wright County GOP**

Please welcome the Wright County Republicans and State Senator Michael Holmstrom and State Representative Marion Rarick.



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**#37 - Cokato Royalty**

Emma and Eva welcome you to the Cokato Corn Carnival Aug 10-12, with our parade Monday, August 10 and coronation on Tuesday, August 11.

**#38 - The Costume Shoppe**

The Costume Shoppe in Maple Lake is open year-round providing high quality costume rentals for all occasions! From Easter Bunnies to Santa's helpers and everything in between. Let's give our local drama students a hand as The Costume Shoppe provides discount prices for all school plays in Central Minnesota!

**#39 - Irish Washer Women**

A Maple Lake St. Patrick's Day tradition, the Irish Washer Women!!!! Three generations of lucky washer women and leprechauns have graced our parade! Give them a big round of applause and watch out for the water!

**#40 - Irish Anglers**

Irish Anglers, the Maple Lake Youth Fishing Team is excited for its fifth season! Boys and girls in grades 6-12 (current school year) who attend or live in the Maple Lake school district are able to join. Check out our website, irishanglers.org for more information.

**#41 - Monticello Royal Ambassadors**

Monticello, known as the "Swan City" sits on the beautiful banks of the Mississippi River. Whether you come for recreation, restaurants, or retail therapy; Monticello has something for you. Ambassadors Lily, Avarie, and Ella invite you to join them for Riverfest in July!



**#42 - Stiftungsfest Ambassador Program**

Stiftungsfest Ambassador Program. Ambassadors Karissa Beneke, Brenna Parpart & Hailey Stender along with Lil Miss Ambassadors Brooklynn Hoen & Aurora Ludwig invite you to join them at the oldest celebration in MN the last weekend of August in Norwood Young America. Stiftungsfest, which means "Founders Day Celebration" in German, will mark its 165th year in 2026. The four-

day celebration traditionally brings in 10,000 or so visitors every year. Throughout the weekend nearly 20 bands perform, is host to one of Minnesota's largest softball tournaments, the Stiftungsfest Ambassador Coronation, a Polka church service, 5K fun run, family night for the kids, and more. This is also our parade year which only happens every 5 years! Be sure to join us and try our famous burgers and brats!



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St. Patrick's Day

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**CITY OF MAPLE LAKE**  
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**SEE YOU AT THE PARADE!**

**Happy St. Paddy's Day**

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MARCH THE 14th 2026  
St. Patrick's Day Festival

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**#43 - Hanover Harvest Festival Royalty**

Greetings from Hanover Royalty "The little city on the crow", Queen Kayla and Princess Haily invite you to the Hanover Harvest Festival the 1st Saturday in August!

**#44 - Mighty Mites**

The award-winning Osman Mighty Mites are a motorized parade unit for the Osman Shrine in St. Paul Minnesota, dedicated to the Shrine Hospitals for children and the kids they serve.

**#45 - Rice Street Royalty**

The Rice Street Royalty Program represents

the North End of St. Paul and the vibrant Rice Street community. Princess Heather, Princess Hailey, and Queen Zayanya (pronounced Zawn-yah) will spend the next five months travelling the state of Minnesota, representing the North End and promoting community leadership. The Rice Street Royalty Program invites you to celebrate next year's Canadian Days Festival with them, the first weekend of August!

**#46 - McBrady McDonald Clan**

From the grand country of Ireland to beautiful Minnesota our roots run deep. We treasure our heritage and family fun time to make

this a great celebration and tradition.

**#47 - Farmington Ambassador Program**

The Farmington Ambassador Program exists to provide opportunities to Young women and girls in the Farmington area. Ambassadors gain poise, speaking abilities and community service experience during their time with the program. The Ambassadors travel near and far to share the Farmington story and goodwill. The program's intent is to teach skills that will be invaluable throughout life. All are invited to attend Farmington Top the Tater Days the fourth week of June each summer.

**#48 - Nelson Sanitation & Rental**

This patriotic truck is the newest truck for Nelson Sanitation & Rental's fleet. It is used for servicing and delivering portable restrooms throughout central Minnesota.

**#49 - Glencoe Royalty**

Miss Glencoe- Denali; Glencoe Princess- Aleisha; Glencoe Jr. Princess- Marsadies; Little Miss Glencoe- Aurora. Join us at Glencoe Days June 26th & 27th!

**#50 - Bethlehem United Church of Christ**

Bethlehem UCC invites you to join them for church service, fellowship, and community outreach. The community pantry is open 24/7. Please visit the labyrinth during the summer for peace and meditation.

**#51 - Foley Ambassadors**

The 2025 Foley Royalty includes Foley Junior Ambassadors MaKenna and Lauren and Little Miss Foleys Alyson and Millie. They would like to invite you to Foley Fun Days the third week in June!

**#52 - Matt Treichler for Sheriff**

Matt Treichler candidate for Wright County Sheriff seeks your support. Please vote to elect Treichler to be your next Wright County Sheriff.

**#53 - Glenwood Waterama**

Happy St Patrick's Day from the royalty from Glenwood Waterama: Queen Lyla, 1st Princess Carly, 2nd Princess Taylor, Junior Queen Etta, and Junior Princess Karina. They are delighted to celebrate

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with Maple Lake today and invite you to the 70th Annual Waterama celebration the last full weekend of July!

**#54 - Osman Shrine Calliope**

The Calliope was built in 1928 in the USA

**#55 - St. Paul Clown Club**

Here come some Clowns. It's the St. Paul Clown Club. Don't ask them not to clown around. That's what they've been doing since 1946. This year the St. Paul Clown Club is celebrating 80 years of bringing joy and laughter to people in parades and community events throughout Minnesota.

**#56 - Litchfield Watercade Royalty**

Miss Litchfield Brooke, Princess Katelyn, (Princess Raigan is at Army Basic Training) and Jr. Princesses Hazel & Brooks

**#57 - Maple Lake Federation of Teachers**

Maple Lake teachers look forward to working with students and families every day. We appreciate the partnerships and community support we receive. We wish everyone a safe and Happy St. Patrick's Day!

**#58 - Montrose Ambassadors**

Jadyn with the Montrose Ambassadors would like to wish you a Happy St. Patty's Day and invite you to Celebrate Montrose at the end of this Summer!

**#59 - The Butchery of Maple Lake**

The Butchery of Maple Lake is a full service retail meat market specializing in fresh, high-quality cuts of meat along with our own home-smoked meats and sausage. We also offer expert wild game processing and reliable catering services. We craft it, you crave it!

**#60 - Farside 4-H Club**

We would love to have you check out our 4-H club! Meetings are the second Sunday of the month at 6:00pm at the Maple Lake Township Hall.

**#61 - Sunfish Dental**

Sunfish Dental located in Maple Lake.

**#62 - True Friends**

True Friends is a nonprofit organization providing life-changing experiences that enhance independence and self-esteem for children and adults with disabilities. Their programs include camp, respite, retreats, team building, therapy and adaptive riding, and travel; serving over 25,000 individuals annually. With locations near Maple Lake, Annandale and Eden Prairie, we serve individuals in Minnesota and throughout the United States.

**#63 - Up the Creek Grill & Bar**

Up The Creek Grill & Bar



**#64 - Pleasureland RV Centers**

Happy St Patrick's Day to all From Pleasureland RV centers, we have been in business since 1971 with 11 locations to serve you in Minnesota South Dakota and Wisconsin with RV sales of all kinds, parts and service tell them the captain sent you.

**#65 - Wright Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association**

Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric utility that provides power to rural Wright County and western Henne-

pin County. The cooperative has been a corporate citizen to the area since 1937 and currently serves more than 55,000 electric accounts. It is headquartered in Rockford, Minn.

**#66 - Winsted Ambassadors**

Winsted Ambassadors Morgan and Yami (yah-mee) are excited to celebrate St Patrick's Day with us! They would like to invite you to join them August 7th and 8th for the Winsted Summer Festival.

**#67 - Miss St. Francis Ambassador Program**

Please welcome the 2025-2026 St. Fran-

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cis Ambassadors. Little Misses Aliyah and Aubrie and their Misses Chelsea and Grace.

**#68 - Maple Grove Ambassadors**

Please welcome the 2025 Maple Grove Ambassadors Paige, Sabrina, and Makenna. The Ambassadors are excited to be here, and thank you for inviting them to the festival. They hope you have a delightful day!

**#69 - Oak Realty**

Oak Realty is proud to be celebrating 52 years in business! They have been working together to help buyers and sellers in the Maple Lake and Annandale area since 1974. Oak Realty loves marketing property; and their friendly, professional and experienced staff welcome the opportunity to be your guide. The Maple Lake Oak Realty office is located 1 block North of BP on Maple Street.

**#70 - MP Nexlevel**

MP Nexlevel is our local utility contractor, that works in 37 states across the US and is PROUDLY headquartered RIGHT HERE in MAPLE LAKE, MN!! This team specialize in Power, Gas, Communications and Data Centers as well as alternative energy such as solar, wind and charging stations. With over 1,300 employees, MP employs many of your local friends, so if you are looking for a rewarding career locally, or you want to travel a little, check them out. Happy St Patrick's Day and Stay Safe from the crew at MPNexlevel.

**#71 - DOJO Karate**

Mention the Maple Lake Parade and receive a free month at DOJO Karate! For Adults, For Kids, For Life!

**#72 - We don't need luck! We've got Jesus!**

Join us at Holy Cross Lutheran Church for services on Sunday mornings or Wednesday nights. Adult and children's faith formation is at 9:15am on Sundays. We also have a fun Wilderness Adventure planned for VBS August 3- 6. All are welcome to join!

**#73 - Hopkins Raspberry Festival Royalty**

A Tradition Preserved! The Hopkins Raspberry Festival is celebrating its 92nd festival the 3rd weekend in July and hosts 5 days of events for all ages and interests including the Marketplace Fair, Fireworks, Grande Day Parade and of course the Raspberry Royalty Coronation. The Hopkins Raspberry Festival Princess Violet Lasley, Princess Catherine Le Grande, and Queen Citlalli (sit-lol-lee) Marin-Beltran would love to invite all of you to celebrate with them in America's Raspberry Capital the 3rd week in July this year!

**#74 - Isanti Ambassadors**

The Isanti Ambassador program is a 501(c) scholarship program that aims to empower young women! We have Miss Ambassadors Hannah, Tori, and Chloe. As well as, Junior Ambassadors Ari, Lyla, and Savannah.

**#75 - Jude Vending**

Peter Jude, his family and his famous candy truck

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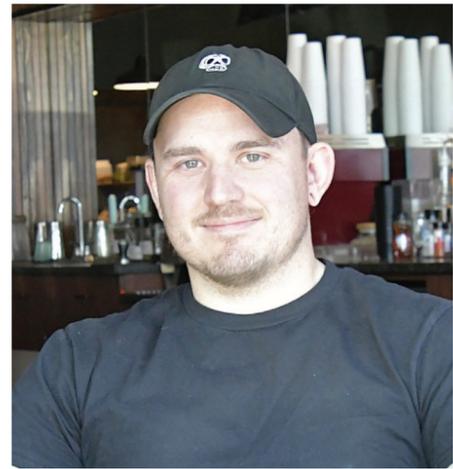
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CHAMBER MEMBER OF THE YEAR



Nick Pawlenty

MAPLE LAKE 2026  
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MAPLE LAKE 2026  
GRAND MARSHALS



Al & Julie Hudek

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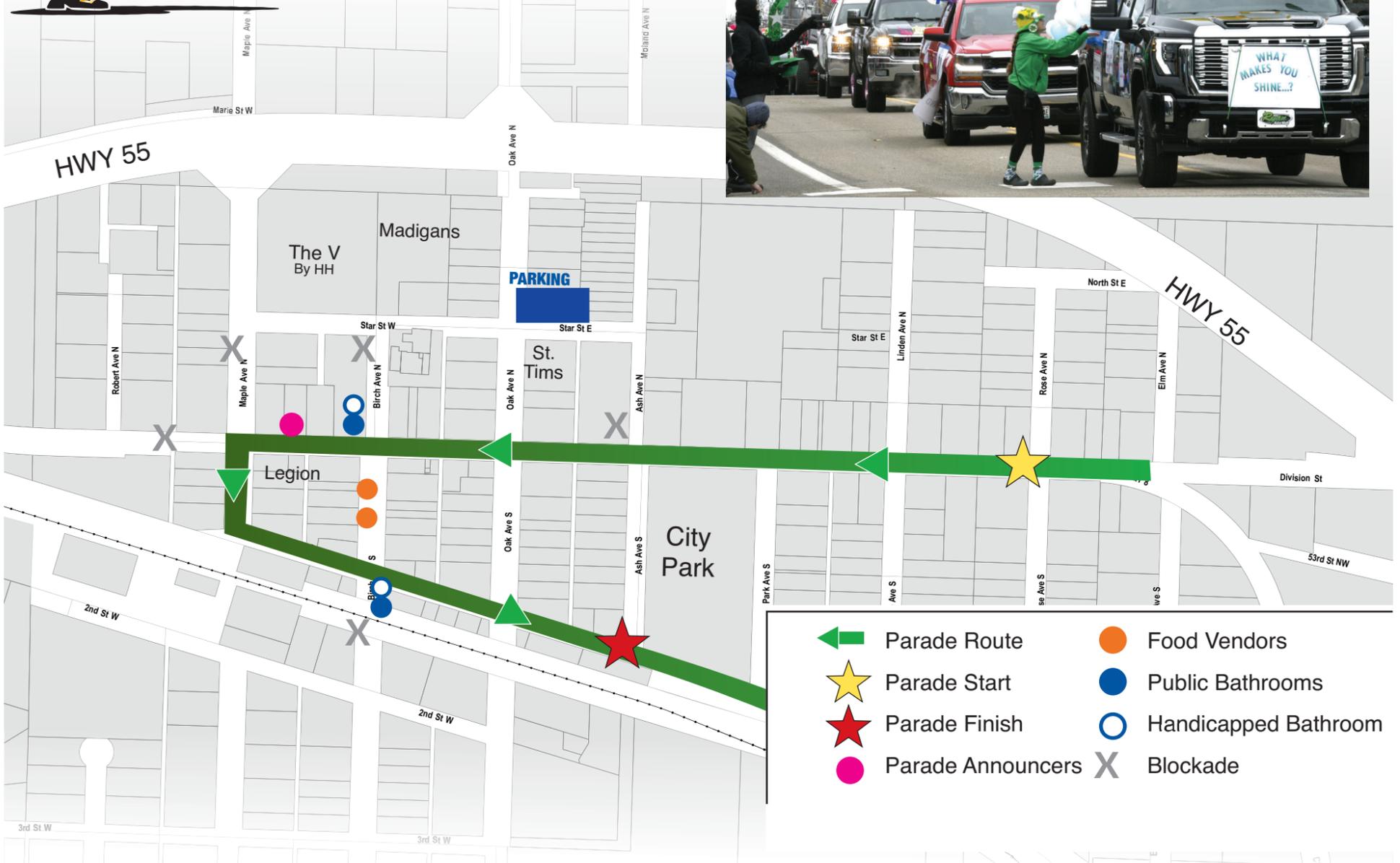
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# St. Patrick's Day

## PARADE DAY MAP



The 49th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade will start on Division street, turn left on Maple Avenue, then another left on 1st Street West and end near the City Park.



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# Nick Pawlenty named Chamber Member of the Year

Nick  
Pawlenty

MAPLE LAKE 2026  
CHAMBER MEMBER OF THE YEAR

By Brenda Erdahl

Cathy Elfstrand evidently knew what she was saying when she told Nick Pawlenty he would be a perfect fit for the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce. He had been working for the Maple Lake Messenger for just a year.

“Cathy caught me delivering newspapers one day and said I would be a perfect fit. I agreed with her and at the next meeting I was volunteered to take the secretary position and voted in,” he said.

That was back in 2016. Despite being the new guy, he was asked to organize the St. Patrick’s Day Parade that same year. He’s been doing it ever since. In 2019 he was rewarded for his efforts with the Chamber Member of the Year award. He won it again this year.

“I was never one to volunteer for anything when I was younger, so when I was voted in for the Chamber, I kind of fell in love with it. Not for the accolades, but I just truly love helping people; the community of Maple Lake was and has been so welcoming it was so easy to give back, especially seeing other community members giving their time as well,” he said.

The Chamber presented Pawlenty with the award at the annual Chamber Social, Wednesday, March 4. The Social is a night dedicated to honoring those who happily do their part to promote and support their community through volunteerism. Other awards given were Grand Marshal, the Community Service Award and the Chamber Business of the Year award.

The Chamber Member of the Year goes to the member that attends and participates in chamber meetings, shows leadership and contributes to the community in a commitment of time and resources.

Pawlenty remained secretary of the Chamber Board until 2020 when he was made vice president. In 2022 he found himself in the role of president. He’s been vice president twice now (2020-2022 and 2024-2026) and is currently president again.

He has overseen organizing the parade for the last 10 years. In addition to his chamber work, he has served on the Maple Lake Library Board for the past five or so years.

“To be honest, volunteering as a whole is a thankless job for the most part, so to know someone was thinking of me and took the time to nominate me is just a good feeling, it helps knowing that people are seeing the time and effort involved.”

He added: “I am not the only person who is working in their free time to make Maple Lake a better place, and I feel there is always someone more deserving of that award. I can name many people who are working as hard or harder than me behind the scenes and it is always nice to recognize them as well.”

The Chamber of Commerce annually presents these awards in conjunction with the Chamber sponsored Maple Lake St. Patrick’s Day festivities which take place on March 14th.



Nick Pawlenty was honored with the Chamber Member of the Year award at this year’s Chamber Social.

## MAPLE LAKE’S 49TH ANNUAL St. Patrick’s Day Parade

## GRAND MARSHAL

Al and Julie Hudek



Al and Julie Hudek have been chosen as this year’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade Grand Marshals.

This year’s Grand Marshal award goes to Al and Julie Hudek because of their life-long dedication to Maple Lake. Both Al and Julie have made Maple Lake their home for their entire lives. They have built their careers in Maple Lake and have strong community involvement.

Al worked for the City of Maple Lake in the public works department for 26 years and before that held positions at Jude Candy and Tobacco, Lohse Transfer and Lake Region Coop., all Maple Lake businesses.

Julie has been with the local bank for 42 years, first as an employee of Security State Bank, then First National Bank of Elk River and now Star Bank.

Al and Julie have given countless hours to different organizations throughout the community including Post Prom, Maple Lake Community Theatre, The Hasty Silver Creek Sportsmens’s Club, St. Timothy Church and School, Maple Lake, Lake Property Owners Association, Maple Lake School Board and more. They have been recognized in the past as St. Patrick’s Day Commodore Award recipients because of their exceptional commitment to community service.

Al and Julie Hudek lead with humility, empathy and a genuine desire to serve others. They consistently go above and beyond expectations, often volunteering behind the scenes and prioritizing the needs of the community over personal recognition.

Al and Julie Hudek will ride in a place of honor in this year’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade, March 14th.

# 2026 March



Community Calendar



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunrise- 6:54 a.m. Sunset- 6:03 p.m.	2	3 • Full Moon • Annandale Conservation Club- 7:30 p.m. • South Haven City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m. • Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m.	4 • Maple Lake Chamber Meeting, 12 p.m. • Maple Lake Chamber Social 5-7p.m.	5 • Lion's Club Meeting, 7 p.m., at the V by HH • Northwest Sportshow, Minneapolis Convention Center, March 5-8	6	7 • Buffalo Indoor Farmer's Market, 9- noon, Buffalo Community Center
8 • Buckthorn Hiking Sticks Robert Ney Regional Park, 1-2:30 p.m. • Daylight Savings Time Begins Sunrise- 7:41 a.m. Sunset- 7:13 p.m.	9 • Annandale City Council Meeting, City Hall, 7 p.m. • Maple Lake School Board Meeting 7p.m.	10 • Chatham Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • American Legion Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Club	11 • Hasty-Silver Creek Sportsmen's Club Meeting, 7 p.m. • Annandale Chamber Meeting, TBD, 11:30 a.m.	12 • Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m. • Sons of the American Legion, 8 p.m. at the Legion Club	13	14 • Maple Lake 49th Annual St Patrick's Day Celebration • Polar Plunge, Buffalo Lake, 12-3 p.m.
15 • Selection Sunday NCAA Basketball Sunrise- 7:28 a.m. Sunset- 7:22 p.m.	16	17 St. Patrick's Day • ML City Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m. • Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Maple Lake Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Albion Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • VFW Post 7664, at the The V, 7 p.m.	18	19 • March Madness NCAA Basketball Round 1 begins • Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m.	20 • First Day of Spring • Post-Prom Fundraiser Fish Fry, Maple Lake American Legion, 5-8 p.m.	21
22 Sunrise- 7:15 a.m. Sunset- 7:31 p.m.	23 • Spring Break- Annandale- Monday, March 23-27	24 • Wright County Snowmobile Association Meeting - American Legion, 7:30 p.m.	25	26 • Knights of Columbus Meeting, St. Timothy Church, 7 p.m.	27	28
29 • Palm Sunday Sunrise- 7:02 a.m. Sunset- 7:40 p.m.	30 • Annandale School Board Meeting, AES Media Center, 7 p.m. • Spring Break-Maple Lake Monday, March 30-Friday, April 3	31				

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