



2025 Newsletter

Star Lake Township Annual Newsletter

Volume 11

2025

Another year has come and gone and for the township it was a relatively quiet year: No pandemic, no burning bridges, no major equipment failures to deal with..... just “normal” township issues.

At the annual election in March 2024, Dan Hanson was elected as the new board supervisor, replacing Emily Riley. He was born and raised in Fergus Falls. He and his wife, Carin, who is an RN in Fergus Falls, have lived on beautiful Star Lake since 2018. He is the owner and operator of Dan’s Vacuum and Sewing which he opened in Fergus Falls in 1986 and now operates from his residence. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, barbequing, gardening, drag racing, hunting, caring for his dogs and chickens and spending time with his children and grandchildren. His duties on the SLT board include, but are not limited to noxious weed control, culverts, and snow removal. He has enjoyed his time on board and will do what he can to help our township thrive.

The other board members include Tammy Ziegler, Chairperson, Dale Lewis, supervisor, Ronola Richards, treasurer and Paulette Johnson, clerk.

If you have any thoughts, concerns, or questions, please feel free to contact any of the board members or the clerk. Contact emails and phone numbers can be found at the conclusion of this newsletter and on our website.

TOWNSHIP MEETINGS:

Monthly SLT Board Meetings: SLT board meetings are open to the public and are a good way for citizens to communicate their concerns, and to stay informed on local township issues. **Monthly board meetings, effective May 2025 will be held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of each month at 6:00 PM, unless otherwise noted. ***

SLT Annual Town Meeting: In accordance with state law, the Annual Town Meeting and Election are held on the second Tuesday in March each year.

At this year's meeting on Tuesday, March 11th, 2025, Dale Lewis was reelected for a 3-yr term as supervisor. Among other topics, the citizens in attendance voted to resume the annual meeting on **Thursday, August 14th at 6:00PM** to finalize the levy for 2026. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS TO ATTEND THIS MEETING.

The annual meeting for 2026 will be held on **March 10th, 2026, at the Town Hall, 31303 380th Street, Dent Mn.** In the event of bad weather, the meeting may be postponed until the following Tuesday. The election polls will be open from 5PM to 8PM, and the annual meeting will begin at 8:15 PM.

Elections:

2024 was a busy year for elections with 4 different elections held throughout the year. It all went smoothly with the help of 8 very capable election judges. A big thank you to all judges! The only election in 2025 was the annual township election in March. However, 2026 will have the annual township election along with State/Fed election(s). Election judges are paid for their time working at the polls as well as for the necessary training to become a judge. Milage is also included. If you are interested in becoming an election judge, please contact Paulette at clerk@starlaketownship.org.

Website: The SLT website got an overhaul last year and we are pleased with the results. We hope you will find it easier to navigate than the old site and offer the information you need. Please check it out at STARLAKETOWNSHIP.ORG

Also, there is a location on our website for residents to enter their email. We encourage all to do so. Our webpage, emails, or the Pelican Rapids Press, will be used to keep everyone updated on activities newsletters, and concerns in the township. **Mailings will no longer be done.**

MINNESOTA ASSOCAITION OF TOWNSHIPS (MAT)

What is MAT? MAT, is an acronym for Minnesota Association of Townships. SLT is a dues paying member of MAT. MAT is a valuable resource for us by 1). supporting township officials in their work through training and acting as a resource in questions of town law: 2). protecting townships, their assets, and their officers and employees by offering a range of insurance products specifically designed for townships; and 3). defending the prerogatives of township government and advocating for necessary resources in the state legislature.

Board supervisors along with the clerk and treasurer participated in in-person training classes conducted by MAT trainers, as well as used their resources multiple times throughout the year. MAT provides on-line training to clerks and treasurers as well as supervisors, which is free of charge to the employees and supervisors. MAT also provides access to in-house lawyers for any technical questions or issues a township may have.

Recycling: Do your part.

Have you ever heard “Keep America Beautiful”? You for sure have if you are over the age of 60. Keep America Beautiful was founded in December 1953. It was founded by a group of American corporations and conducted many public service announcement campaigns in its early history. Some reports contribute the coining of the term “litterbug” to one of these early campaigns.

In 1971 the Earth Day campaign was launched with the theme, “People start pollution. People can stop it.”

Since these first campaigns in the 50’s, recycling has become a way of life for most. And for those who still are not recycling, Otter Tail County makes it easy. There are many recycling bins located in towns, and various parking lots across the county which accept plastic, glass, cans, cardboard, magazines, etc. Dent has recycling bins in the parking lot east of the Catholic Church and there are also bins in the parking lot of the Lutheran church at the corner of County 35 and Hwy 1. Larger facilities are located in Pelican Rapides, Fergus Falls, and New York Mills.

Have larger items and don’t know what to do with them? There are several recycling companies in the area. One of which is Wadena Hide and Fur. They are not only interested in hides and fur, but will also **buy** scrap iron, pop cans, auto and marine batteries, and other various metals such as copper, aluminum, brass, and cars! Who knew cleaning up our homes and yards could put a few extra dollars in our pockets along with making our section of America Beautiful!

ROAD RIGHT OF WAY (ROW) ISSUE

This is a topic that has been addressed in nearly every single issue of SLT’s past newsletters and yet it continues to be an issue.

ROW laws are very prescriptive with ample legal precedent and are rarely overturned. They are tough laws because they need to be. The road right of way provides for effective maintenance operations, the accommodation of public utilities and the safety of the general traveling public. The MN Statute that covers state, county, township, and municipal roadways is MN Statute 160.

Here are the basics of the Statute:

- 1. Do not plant, place, or build “anything” but grass and a legal mailbox with the road right of way.*
- 2. Do not push or dump snow onto a roadway or within its ROW.*
- 3. Do not cultivate/farm the ROW or its ditch.*
- 4. Trees do not become “trees” until they are 6” in diameter at a point 24” above ground—less than that, they are legally considered “brush” and can be legally removed by the road authority at its discretion.*

Note: Township Officers do NOT write these laws but are legally sworn to insure they are complied with and the SLT Board is committed to addressing any and all of these violations.

Violations will be addressed as follows:

1. ROW violations that present a clear and present danger to the public will be addressed immediately and depending upon circumstances may be corrected without prior notice.
 2. ROW violations that have a negative impact on employee safety, roadway stability, or drainage will be the next priority. Property owners will be advised of the violation and requested to take corrective action.
 3. "New" ROW violations will be addressed next to avoid "growing" more problems. Property owners will be advised of the violation and requested to take corrective action.
 4. SLT will continue with its tree trimming operations which essentially includes the trimming of branches over-hanging the ROW at an elevation of less than 14 feet. Removal of trees will only be done with the owner's permission.
 5. An increased use of legal counsel to address specific SLT ROW issues to ensure property owners and township rights are properly respected.
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NOXIOUS WEEDS

Per MN State Law, townships are required to conduct annual inspections for noxious weeds and report findings back to their local Soil & Water Conservation District each spring.

What is a noxious weed? Visit this State of Minnesota site for a list: www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list

Things to know about noxious weeds:

1. **Prohibited:** This means all plant parts are to be destroyed by means of an herbicide, dug up and burned, or bagged and put in the county dumpster. Some of these weeds include *Giant hogweed*, *Common Teasel*, *Yellow Star Thistle*, *Dalmatian toad flax* and *Meadow Knapweed*.
2. **Controlled:** This means the use of herbicides or mowed prior to going to seed. Some of these weeds include, *Galic Mustard*, *Plumless Thistle*, *Leafy Spurge*, *Narrow leaf Bittercress*, *Canada Thistle*, *Purple Loose Strife*, *Leary Spurge* & *Wild Parsnip*, and *Common Tansey*,
3. **Restricted:** *Glossy Buckthorn* and *Common Buckthorn* are detrimental to humans and animal health.
4. **Specially Regulated:** Measures must be taken to minimize potential harm caused by these plants such as *Poison Ivy*.

Not sure what these weeds look like? There are several plant identification apps for cell phones. One of the more reliable apps is "Picture This".

If you are unsure and need help identifying a noxious weed, contact SLT's local weed inspector, Dan Hanson, at sup2@starlaketownship.org.

WINTER OPTIONS

A couple brief reminders on snow operations:

1. When cleaning out your drive, DO NOT deposit snow upon the roadway or its ROW. This applies to all public roads, and it is state law.
 2. Please do not park anything on the roadway in advance of, or during a snow event. Many of our roads are narrow and we cannot afford to have a plow truck get stuck trying to get around a parked vehicle.
 3. Property owners- if possible, please do not park seasonal use items such as watercraft, trailers, docks/lifts, or any type of vehicle within the ROW or close to it. This is especially critical for those areas prone to severe drifting during the winter. This greatly complicates/inhibits our snow plowing ability. **Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!**
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DUST CONTROL

Individuals interested in requesting seasonal dust control are reminded that applications for such are due May 1st, along with full payment. The fee for 2025 is \$0.91 per lineal foot for a width of 18 ft. Applications can be found online on our website or by contacting the clerk at clerk@starlaketownship.org. Applications and payment should be submitted to Star Lake Township, PO Box 61, Dent MN 56528.

EMPLOYMENT

The township is always looking for interested people to share their skills and talents with the township, whether it be as an elected official (you must be a resident of Star Lake Township to qualify), or a member of the maintenance team or as an election judge. If interested in options SLT has to offer, please contact Dale sup1@starlaketownship.org or Paulette at clerk@starlaketownship.org.

MISC:

The township had a safe year with no incidents to report.

The township purchased a used Ford 250 Pickup with a snowplow last fall. We added a sander to the back of it, and it has come in handy to plow areas where it is difficult for the CAT grader or plow truck to maneuver.

SLT purchased the CAT grader 4 years ago. The original loan amount was \$176,000. The payoff balance on the loan as of March, 2025 is \$106,220.05.

STAR LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION:

Check out SLPOA's webpage for information on Star Lake and activities happening in the area.
Starlakeassociation.com.

STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP STAFF

The township would like to thank the members of its maintenance staff: Terry, Mike, Doug, Jim and Judy.
Thanks to each of our staff for the excellent work in 2024.

SUPERVISOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Dan Hanson	218-770-9021	sup2@starlaketownship.org
Dale Lewis	903-815-9867	sup1@starlaketownship.org
Tammy Zeigler	701-367-7164	sup3@starlaketownship.org

TREASURER CONTACT INFORMATION

Ronola Richards	218-205-7616	treas@starlaketownship.org
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CLERK CONTACT INFORMATION

Paulette Johnson	763-412-0377	clerk@starlaketownship.org
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