October 2023

LCSC Communicator

Regional News, Views, and Information

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative
Together we achieve

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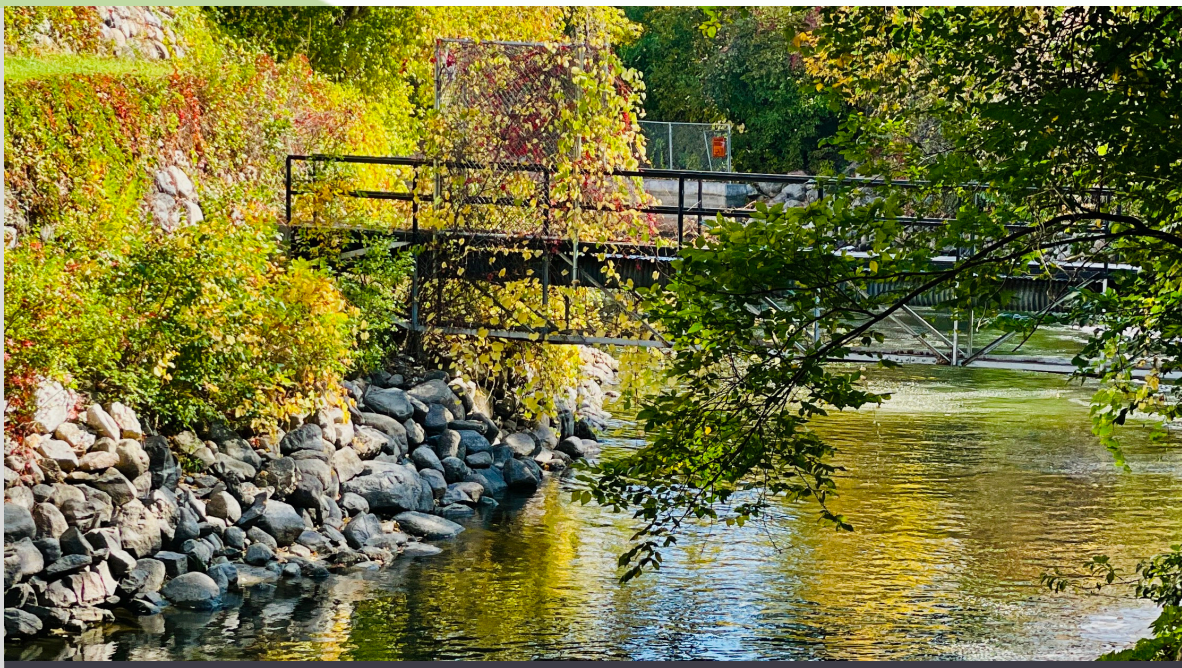
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PLEASE VISIT OUR CALENDAR FOR IMPORTANT DATES

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An equal opportunity employer

GOVERNMENT-
Electronic Edition
Open the full issue
www.lcsc.org



HOW CAN A RIVER BENEFIT A COMMUNITY?

If you happen to be in Fergus Falls, I highly recommend strolling along the downtown riverwalk.

During a recent chat with Jean Bowman, the City of Fergus Falls Communications Manager, she provided an update on the downtown riverfront project.

Following our meeting, I decided to go for a walk and take in the serene sounds of the rushing river and the crunching leaves beneath my feet.

While on my walk, I was able to witness the incredible progress being made on the Downtown Riverfront project. The natural beauty that surrounded me reminded me of how important it is to appreciate our natural community assets.

continued on next page...

Source: Jean Bowman, City of Fergus Falls Communications Director, Fergus Falls Downtown and River Front Master Plan, www.dnr.state.mn.us

Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC's Communications Generalist

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Many cities were initially built on rivers as a water source and to move people and goods around the expanding populated areas. Fergus Falls is fortunate to have the beauty of a river running through the city's heart. In the last decade, there has been an awakening around using this asset to drive the economy in Fergus Falls.

In October 2016, the City of Fergus Falls embarked on developing a community-based vision and master plan for the downtown and the undervalued riverfront. The plan was approved on December 18, 2017, and today, Spies Park and an event pavilion are in place in phase one of the plan and phase two is currently underway. The placement of new asphalt in the redesigned parking lot was happening while I took photos of the area.

While the initial project design has undergone some changes due to budget limitations, the approved amenities being developed along the river are breathtaking. The state-of-the-art pavilion is now home to the Fergus Falls Farmers Market, which opens on Wednesdays and Saturdays in the summer and fall months. The pavilion also serves the community for private events.

Since 2019, in addition to the development of Spies Park, several breweries have opened along the river, and a development company is repurposing a former grain mill into a boutique hotel. Moreover, the removal of buildings and environmental hazards along the Otter Tail River has been completed at the 29-acre property formerly owned by Mid-Am Dairy.

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SPIES PARK

Creating beautiful spaces for families and individuals to gather has helped to increase the number of businesses and retail shops in the picturesque downtown Fergus Falls. Over the past two years, many clothing boutiques and retail shops have opened downtown, making it an attractive destination for visitors and locals alike.



MID-AM DAIRY PROPERTY BEFORE AND AFTER



Former Mid-America Dairy Site Post Demolition

> The river's beauty attracts tourists, which in turn helps to create a vibrant local economy that can benefit businesses in the surrounding area, said Bowman.

Downtown Fergus Falls also boasts a thriving arts community, with many locations within walking distance of each other. These include the Lake Region Arts Council, A Center for the Arts, Kaddatz Gallery, and Springboard for the Arts. The presence of these arts organizations contributes to the distinctiveness and allure of the culturally rich community.

It's gratifying to see the positive impact of the recent downtown street improvement projects. Thanks to bustling sidewalks, a vibrant Farmers Market twice a week, and convenient parking options, it's clear that the investment made in the downtown revitalization efforts has been worthwhile.

If you want to learn more about the process the Fergus Falls community initiated to revive its downtown and its next phase, visit their website at www.ci.fergus-falls.mn.us under Community Development. You can also contact Jean Bowman, City of Fergus Falls Communications Manager, at Jean.Bowman@FergusFallsMN.gov.

From the

Executive Director

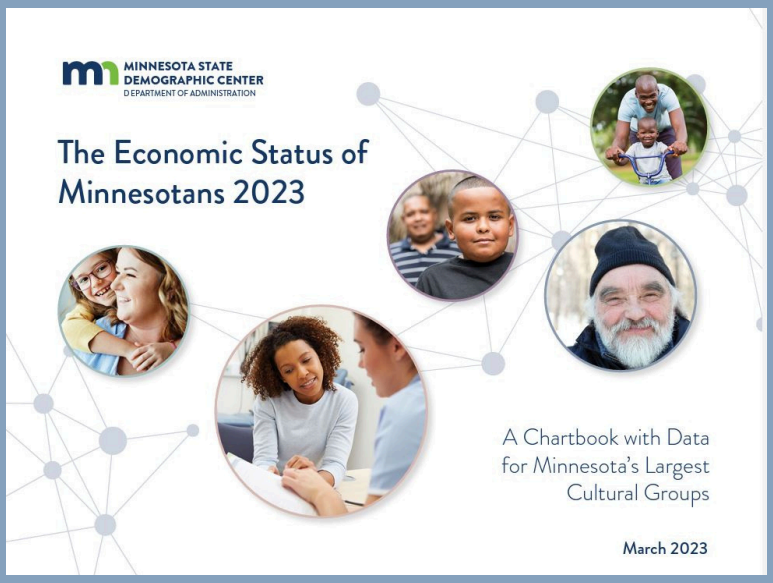
"Learning, Leading, and Innovating to Achieve Vibrant, Inclusive Communities."



Jeremy Kovash
Executive Director

Greetings, I hope you are enjoying a beautiful fall in the wonderful Lakes Country. If you have not yet explored "The Economic Status of Minnesotans 2023" from the Minnesota State Demographic Center, it provides some interesting takeaways for us to consider. One "aha" moment I read was that Minnesota's median age is 42, which coincides with the age of the white cultural group. Interestingly, most indigenous, black, and populations of color are much younger than white Minnesotans. Half of the Somali population, for example, is under the age of 18.

As we consider a shrinking workforce, I think this brings implications for how we recruit, hire, and retain staff. At Lakes Country, we pride ourselves on shared services and feel that the need for these types of services will only become more prevalent and in demand in the future. We are optimistic that you, our members, might explore these innovations with us. I hope you enjoy this issue of "The Communicator." Together we Achieve…



The Economic Status of Minnesotans 2023 describes the economic status of all Minnesotans and the 17 largest cultural groups in the state– with new data on employment, hours worked, income, education, and much more. Click **HERE** to learn more.

City Leaders LEADERSHIP GROWTH

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative

Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC's Communications Generalist

LCSC membership offers numerous benefits, including professional development opportunities.

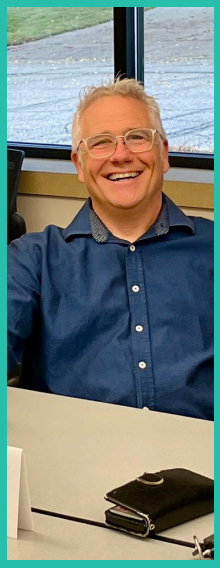
Recently, regional city leaders visited LCSC for a two-day Leadership Growth professional development session. The purpose of the session was to provide leaders with hands-on experience in handling challenging situations and difficult people, helping them enhance their leadership abilities.

The program focused on two vital aspects:

- Improving the ability to manage conflict, participate in (and lead) difficult conversations, and mediate difficult situations.
- Discussing roles and responsibilities for staff and elected officials, identifying common challenges and possible approaches, with tips for effectively communicating this information with difficult elected officials and/or colleagues.













Leadership Growth Facilitator



Dave Bartholomay

Dave Bartholomay is the long-time Mayor of Circle Pines, Minnesota; the CEO of The Leadership Growth Group, which focuses on improving the leadership capacity of public sector leaders; and recently retired as the Program Coordinator for the State of Minnesota's Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution, where he helped state and local leaders build their ability to resolve some of today's most challenging public challenges.

What Can Go Wrong, Will!

Planning for Resilient Cities

Keep your city running when faced with disaster. Leverage sample templates and guidance from facilitators to assemble the necessary components and strategy for cybersecurity, business continuity, and IT incident planning. This workshop will focus on cyber incidents but is applicable for any disaster. **All audiences encouraged.**



IMPORTANT TRAINING INFORMATION FOR MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL IN CHARGE OF SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL.

Minnesota Smart Salting Update

- MPCA's Smart Salting Tool - The ultimate chloride reduction resource
- New Low Salt No Salt Minnesota Program!
- Smart Salting Certification Training Season is here!
- Smart Salting Certification Refreshers
- Loans for Small Businesses to upgrade equipment for chloride reduction
- Smart Salting for Community Leaders Workshops

PACC



Source: Leigh Shebeck, PACC Executive Director
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC's Communications Generalist

PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES IN PLACE

Much has changed since my tour of the remodel construction project at the Perham Area Community Center (PACC) back in February 2022. The dust has settled, and the sounds of hammering, drills, and saws are no longer a part of the every day obstacles for the staff at the PACC. Leigh Shebeck, the PACC Executive Director, shared that a few touch-ups and the final walk-through with the developer are pending to call the facility project completed.

Upon entering the PACC, you'll immediately notice that the reception area, formerly located on the left, has been transformed into a modern and inviting waiting space with contemporary furniture and designs. The reception area has been relocated to a more spacious location that allows for easy member traffic flow.



You'll be greeted by beautiful lighting, freshly painted rooms, and user-friendly designed spaces that welcome both individuals and families.

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The goal of the addition of square footage, equipment updates and improvements is to increase usage and create a healthier community. Already, the member check-in data speaks for itself and is demonstrating positive results.

Facility Check-ins
2019 = 8,364
2022 = 4,918 (pandemic)
2023 = 8,519

The party rooms and children's play areas have greatly contributed to the increase in check-ins. "High demand for children's birthday parties is leading to many bookings of these new amenities at the PACC," said Shebeck. "Families are looking for activities for their young ones, and the new play areas at the PACC are precisely what the community needs," he added.

Shebeck gave me a tour of the facility, just as he did last February. I was amazed by the changes that had taken place since my last visit. The facility made tremendous use of space and had fitness options available for every age and fitness level.

Shebeck was especially eager to show me the therapy pool, which is being used by Perham Health to provide aquatic therapy. This heated pool allows patients to undergo physical therapy treatments while in water, which can help reduce pain and stress on joints and muscles. Patients can also strengthen and stretch their muscles and improve their balance without worrying about falling.

As the renovation project nears completion, the PACC is serving as a great example for other communities to follow. Shebeck has been collaborating with the communities of Wilmar and Breckenridge to provide consultation for their community facilities. This is a testament to the excellent work put into the design and development of the PACC to make it a facility to meet the needs of the Perham community well into the future.

Do you want to learn more about the PACC and the steps taken to undergo this redesign to serve the Perham area? Contact PACC Executive Director Leigh Shebeck at director@perhamareacommunitycenter.net



LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL

LEADERSHIP

Building Engaged Teams

Build teamwork by developing and cultivating shared leadership among team members and use concrete tools to get maximum team results.

2 NOVEMBER, 2023

8:30AM-3PM

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REGISTER TODAY

LAKES COUNTRY SERVICE COOPERATIVE

City Leadership Networking Luncheon

Date: Friday, November 17, 2023

Time: 11:30 - 1:00 pm

Location: 1001 East Mount Faith Fergus Falls, MN 56537



GRANT FUNDS REMAIN AVAILABLE

for child care providers and centers through Otter Tail County's Child Care Capacity Grant Program.

Author: Shannon Terry, Otter Tail County Public Information Officer

The program, launched in September 2022, is intended to support child care program needs for existing, new, and expanding providers in Otter Tail County. To date, more than $150,000 has been awarded to 25 child care providers and centers in Otter Tail County.

This funding is possible thanks to a Child Care Economic Development Grant from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) awarded to the County.

Otter Tail County knows that access to quality and affordable child care is needed for people to live and work in our region. In addition to keeping children safe and providing quality early childhood experiences, child care is a workforce need. According to a 2022 report from First Children's Finance, there is a shortage of 1,035 child care slots in Otter Tail County. The Child Care Capacity Grant Program will help address this need by providing financial support to new providers who will add child care slots and existing providers who will retain the current supply of child care slots.

GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

Eligibility: Child care centers, family providers, and multiple-provider pod models are eligible to apply for the Child Care Capacity Grant Program if they are located in Otter Tail County, provide full-time child care, and have a current active license in good standing or be in the process of completing licensure. Second-time applicants are now eligible to apply for additional grant funding. Visit ottertailcounty.gov/childcare-grant for the complete eligibility list.

Use of funds: Grant funds can be used to reimburse costs associated with training, equipment purchases, program needs, and facility improvements required by licensing and/or fire safety requirements.

Application process: Access full program guidelines and the application form at ottertailcounty.gov/childcare-grant. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until October 31, 2023, subject to the availability of funds.

More information about the Child Care Capacity Grant Program and other child care efforts can be found at ottertailcounty.gov/childcare.



Using the Intercultural Development Inventory

AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Author: Jane Eastes, LCSC's Deputy Executive Director
Source: Intercultural Development Inventory - www.idiinventory.com

The world we live in is increasingly interconnected. The ability to navigate and thrive in diverse cultural environments, or multicultural competence, is a skill that we need to both learn and teach. We need to develop competence to communicate and teach effectively as our students come from more diverse experiences, and students will need to learn these skills to effectively communicate and engage in their community and workplace. One powerful tool for assessing and enhancing intercultural competence is the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Schools in our region and across the state have used the IDI as a formative assessment to begin the development of intercultural competence, often starting with leadership teams and smaller groups.

What is the IDI:

The Intercultural Development Inventory, commonly referred to as the IDI, is a widely recognized assessment tool designed to measure an individual's or a group's intercultural competence. It's widely used in schools and Universities, as well as nonprofit, for-profit, and governmental organizations. Developed by Dr. Mitchell R. Hammer, the IDI helps individuals and organizations evaluate their current level of intercultural competence and provides insights on how to progress further.

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How Does the IDI Work?

The IDI is a valid questionnaire-based assessment that measures an individual's intercultural competence on a continuum of six stages:
1. Denial: Individuals in this stage may resist recognizing cultural differences and may perceive their own culture as superior.
2. Polarization: People at this stage tend to view cultural differences as dichotomous, often emphasizing the contrasts between cultures.
3. Minimization: In this stage, individuals recognize cultural differences but may minimize them, seeking commonalities and similarities.
4. Acceptance: People in this stage genuinely appreciate cultural diversity and seek to understand and adapt to different cultural norms.
5. Adaptation: At this stage, individuals can adapt their behavior and communication styles effectively in various cultural contexts.
6. Integration: The highest level of intercultural competence, individuals at this stage effortlessly integrate diverse perspectives and values into their own identity.
The IDI provides a detailed analysis of an individual's intercultural competence profile, highlighting areas for improvement and suggesting strategies for development.

Benefits of the IDI:

1. Self-Awareness: The IDI helps individuals gain a deeper understanding of their own cultural biases and how they impact their interactions with others.
2. Personal Growth: It serves as a roadmap for personal development, guiding individuals toward higher levels of intercultural competence.
3. Enhanced Communication: By pinpointing areas for improvement, the IDI enables individuals to become more effective communicators across cultures.
4. Organizational Development: Many organizations use the IDI to assess and develop the intercultural competence of their teams and employees, fostering a more inclusive and culturally competent workplace.
5. Conflict Resolution: The IDI can be a valuable tool in resolving cultural conflicts and promoting harmony in diverse settings.

Accessing the IDI:

The IDI has to be administered by a Qualified Administrator (QA). Lakes Country Service Cooperative has several QAs on staff who are able to administer the IDI to a group within your organization. To schedule an IDI assessment, or for more information about the process, contact Jane Eastes, jeastes@lcsc.org or Troy Haugen, thaugen@lcsc.org.

In an era marked by cultural diversity in every community, intercultural competence is a critical skill that can lead to personal and professional success. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) offers a structured approach to assess and enhance intercultural competence. By using the insights gained from the IDI, individuals and organizations can bridge cultural gaps, foster inclusivity, and engage effectively in a multicultural world. It's not only a tool; it leads to a pathway to a more connected and culturally aware future.

ICS

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Building Strong Connections



OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH YOU

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How ICS Partners with You

ICS has partnered with all nine of the different service cooperatives across Minnesota. In partnership with you, our team offers a variety of innovative facility solutions including:

- Long-Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM) Management
- Long-Range Planning and Capital Improvement Planning
- Energy Efficiency and Monitoring Services
- Technical Services

Where You Can Find Us



About Us

Since 2006, ICS has been partnering with owners, architects, engineers, and other construction professionals to fulfill the mission of: **positively impacting people through innovative facility solutions. As a whole, we help plan, build, and operate your facilities well.** Today, the ICS team consists of 95 innovators who all lead through the ICS core values, which include We Care, Integrity, Quality, Collaboration, and Smart Innovation.

Contact Us

Karen Klein
Cooperative Accounts Manager
karen.klein@ics-builds.com
651.728.1880

Lori Christensen
Account Executive/Business Development
lori.christensen@ics-builds.com
320.815.9544

/ ics-builds.com

/ ics consulting, inc.

/ @icsconsultinginc

/ @ics_consulting_

>>> NAVAGATING <<<

WORKPLACE SAFETY

with LCSC's Health & Safety Team



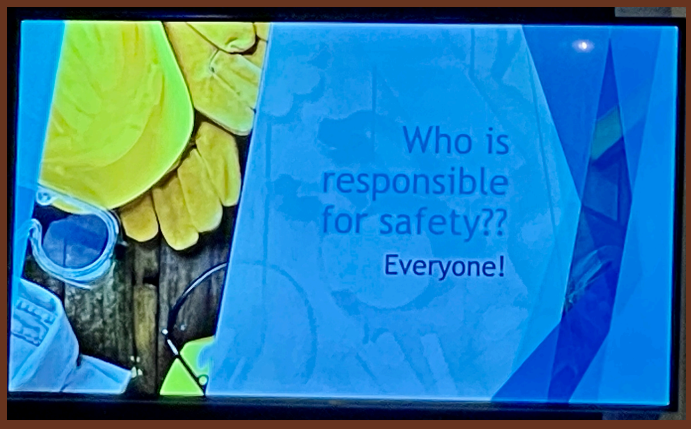
Source: Source: Rick Brynildson, LCSC Health & Safety Manager
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC's Communications Generalist

STAFF TRAINING SESSIONS

The Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC) Health and Safety team works all year long to help our members build, implement, and maintain strong safety programs in the workplace.

Brynildson explained that for all our health and safety members, safety is a mandated compliance requirement. With the support of the LCSC Health & Safety team, our members can foster positive behavioral changes and establish a strong culture of health and safety.

Efficiencies for programs in the workplace often influence decisions, but health and safety programming aids in creating an environment where everyone takes ownership.



Data shows that successful implementation of health and safety programs can increase employee efficiency and job satisfaction overall. Plus, National Safety Council studies have shown that conservatively, investing in injury prevention yields a return of between $2 and $6 for every $1 spent.

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Slip, trip, and fall incidents must be taken seriously as they are consistently one of the primary causes of workplace injuries.

According to workplace safety statistics, slip, trip, and fall incidents are consistently one of the leading causes of workplace injuries. These accidents can occur in various settings, including offices, hallways, construction areas, and storage. Factors such as weather conditions, wet or uneven surfaces, cluttered walkways, inappropriate footwear, and inadequate lighting can increase the risk of these incidents. Implementing proper safety measures and practices to prevent slip, trip, and fall accidents will vastly improve the well-being of their employees.

Significant direct and indirect costs can be associated with organizations that neglect to support a robust health and safety program. Organizations could see increased direct expenses related to their Workers' Compensation modification rates and should strive to have a modification rate of 1.0 or lower. Below that rate, they may see discounts from the provider. Above this rate, they may see premium increases and added fees for services put in place by the provider of their Workers' Compensation insurance. Changes in modification rates have a two-year lag time, so employers may not see the impact of not implementing an effective safety plan immediately following an incident. This increases the time and effort to reduce the modification rate and, ultimately, may pay a higher premium. An increase in indirect costs may include finding new employees to fill in for the absent employee, overtime, hiring subs, or long-term substitutes. In addition, administrative costs can increase due to added duties to process the necessary paperwork for claims and track employee absences.

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LCSC Safety Manager, Rick Brynildson leading Safety Training for school custodial and maintenance employees.



School nurses attending American Heart Association Basic Life Support training.



Wayne Stephens, a Health & Safety Facilitator at LCSC, providing Basic Life Support training certified by the American Heart Association.

Brynildson shared that the LCSC Health & Safety program has successfully partnered with cities, counties, and the Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA) during demolition and remodeling projects. “Our team has identified a variety of issues, including asbestos, lead in paint, fire, and building code standards, which has aided in members staying on track for completing projects on time,” said Brynildson.

At the start of the Minnesota-Covid mandated shutdowns, the Health & Safety team was instrumental in assisting members in rolling out COVID-19 planning. The team was available to assist members out in the field. Brynildson shared that they were able to help members set up COVID-19 plans, contact tracing and assisted members to meet ever-changing legislative mandates.



LCSC Health & Safety Facilitator, Jeff Preuss leading Health & Safety training for the staff at Hillcrest Lutheran Academy

“I am proud of our team and our ability to responsively navigate issues and be a problem solver for our members. When problem areas are missed, it allows us to walk alongside our members and help them navigate through an issue and help them find a solution,” said Brynildson.

If you want to learn more about the Health & Safety program at LCSC, contact Health & Safety Program Manager Rick Brynildson at rbrynildson@lcsc.org.





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CONTACT US
Phone: (218) 739-3273
(800)739-3273 (toll free)
Fax: (218) 739-2459
Email: communicator@lcsc.org
Executive Director: Jeremy Kovash

COMMUNICATOR STAFF
Editors: Jane Eastes: jeastes@lcsc.org
Mary Phillipe: mphillipe@lcsc.org
Address:
Lakes Country Service Cooperative
1001 E. Mount Faith
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
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