

*epln*

**IMPACT**

**REPORT**

**2022-2023**

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# EPLN TURNS DONATIONS INTO NEWS



**By Steve Schewe, EPLN publisher and CEO**  
[steve.schewe@eplocalnews.org](mailto:steve.schewe@eplocalnews.org)

**Three years in, Eden Prairie Local News (EPLN) has found its way into many of your email inboxes. When I visit the grocery store or the Eden Prairie Community Center for a fitness class, many people I meet tell me they start their day reading EPLN.**

Thanks to our dedicated team of employees, freelancers, donors, and volunteers, we've published more than 2,000 local news stories, which are Eden Prairie's "story of us."

Our advertisers provided essential support to fund our reporting. As a nonprofit, we're also grateful for our foundation funders, including those who fund the NewsMatch campaign of the Institute of Nonprofit News (INN), Google News Initiative, the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, the Eden Prairie Community Foundation, and service clubs like EP Rotary and the Lions. Thanks to the many family foundations and individual donors who are listed in the back of this report.

What did EPLN provide for this generous support?

We fulfilled our public service mission by publishing a Voter Guide to the 2022 election. You can read more about this mammoth endeavor on Page 10.

EPLN also dramatically increased its sports coverage. Our lead sports reporting team included Steve Mulholland and photographer

Rick Olson. Rick took second place in the sports photography award category from the Minnesota chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Another EPLN contributor, photographer Gillian Holte, was a finalist for an INN Insight Award for Visual Journalism.

Juliana Allen extended EPLN's schools beat to include coverage of the Performing Institute of Minnesota Arts High School and the International School in addition to her comprehensive coverage of Eden Prairie public schools. Stories that wouldn't have appeared in any other media if EPLN wasn't here.

Looking for best practices, we organized a Shoptalk conference of other local nonprofit news publications. Details are on Page 9.

In the last quarter of our fiscal year, we hired Brianna Collett to strengthen our social media engagement, Joanna Takes as a co-editor, and Greg Olson to represent our advertising opportunities. All told, we now have two full-time equivalent (FTE) employees spread over seven talented people.

Details on finances are on pages 7 and 8.

We have some exciting things happening for 2023-24, and you can read about a few of those on Page 11.

We'll also strive to persuade those of you who have yet to become our subscribers and donors to join us. For those of you who are already part of our efforts to tell the news, please spread the word to your friends and neighbors. Thank you for your continued support!

# BOARD LEADERS & STAFF

## OUR PAID STAFF

EPLN continues to expand its paid staff in order to provide trustworthy and compelling news.

In 2022-23, the nonprofit hired a part-time education reporter and a part-time general assignments reporter. Late in the fiscal year the nonprofit complemented the employed staff by contracting with three individuals to 1) promote EPLN through social media, 2) maintain its calendar and people operations and 3) sell advertising in EPLN. These contractors support the editorial functions of the nonprofit and are paid stipends under contractual agreements.

Other key positions at EPLN are filled with volunteers and board members, including Steve Schewe as CEO/publisher, Ben Hymans as chief technology officer, and Kelly Salwei as chief financial officer.



*Clockwise from upper left, Stuart Sudak, Jim Bayer, Juliana Allen, and Joanna Takes are paid staff journalists. Not pictured are paid staff Brianna Collett, social-media manager; Greg Olson, sales rep; and Amy Nylander, calendar editor and people operations.*



*The EPLN Board of Directors meets every other month to conduct business.*

## OUR BOARD

Part of what makes EPLN unique are its nonprofit business model and the fact that it is led by local residents. It's not part of a for-profit chain, and not owned and run by a hedge fund.

EPLN has an 11-member, elected, volunteer board of directors that is responsible for oversight of the nonprofit.

Board members at the conclusion of the 2022-23 fiscal year were: Chair Nancy Tyra-Lukens, Vice Chair Carol Bomben, Chief Financial Officer Kelly Salwei, Secretary Mark Weber, Publisher/CEO Steve Schewe, Chief Technology Officer Ben Hymans, and directors Pastor Rod Anderson, Vijay Dixit, Frank Farrell, David Lindahl, and Jeff Strate.



# LIVING THE MISSION

"The mission of Eden Prairie Local News is to serve our community with trustworthy reporting, compelling stories, and news you can use — anytime, anywhere."

## SERVING EP

**Our 2022 print-edition Voter Guide built community and democracy in EP**

An example of EPLN's service to the community is the 2022 Voter Guide that was mailed to 26,000 EP homes prior to the general election, helping inform residents about local candidates and their positions.



## TRUSTWORTHY REPORTING

**EPLN is your reliable -- and experienced -- source of local news**

People who can identify reliable sources of information and filter through the "noise" of modern media have greater confidence to voice their opinions and enact positive change. One of EPLN's strengths is the experience and local knowledge of its paid and volunteer journalists, as well as its editors. We not only strive to deliver reliable information about the city, schools, local businesses, and "stories of us," we practice it daily.

## COMPELLING STORIES

**When it comes to important and compelling stories, EPLN delivers**

Compelling news stories published by EPLN in 2022-23 included: closing the case on a suicide in the Scheels store; unlocking the mystery of the sacred Red Rock; police assistance to the U.S. Postal Service in executing a search warrant at an Eden Prairie home; numerous reports on the construction and opening of the Asia Mall; an investigation of an Eden Prairie High School teacher, and much more.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

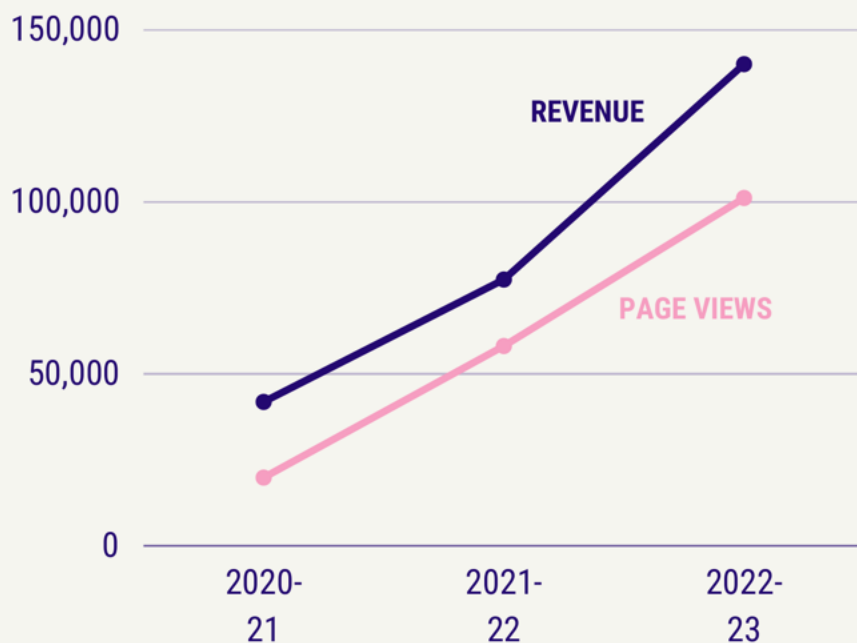
**Our comprehensive calendar of events is an example of "news you can use"**

EPLN has published more than 2,000 events in its website calendar since the organization's inception, and has published more than 900 events in the last year alone. Carefully tended by EPLN contractor Amy Nylander, our calendar of events has become the place to go when you're looking for something fun and interesting to do in Eden Prairie.

What are the metrics that measure EPLN's effort to provide trustworthy, compelling news that's useful to residents? For a nonprofit news website like ours, it's number of stories, donations, website page views, level of reader engagement, email newsletter subscribers, advertising, foundation grants, overall revenue, and more. Here are a few of the numbers that help show that EPLN is growing in size and advancing its mission:

# EPLN BY THE NUMBERS

The BLUE line below shows dollar growth in donations to EPLN over the past three fiscal years, July 1 through June 30. The PINK line shows growth in the EPLN website's average monthly page views.



**2,803**

Email subscribers  
as of June 30, 2023

**47%**

Year-over-year subscriber  
growth, 2022 to 2023

**12**

Writers/photographers  
added to staff in 2022-23

More than 1,000 stories were published by Eden Prairie Local News during the fiscal year from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, and the range of topics was wide. Here are the story categories that rose to the top of the list for 2022-23:

- Sports (248 stories)
- City of Eden Prairie (173)
- Schools (117)
- Public safety (78)
- Community service (71)

# FINANCIALS FROM FISCAL YEAR 2022-23

An important responsibility for nonprofits like EPLN is to be accountable for the charitable contributions and grants from donors and foundations, and to spend those dollars wisely. Below is our financial Statement of Activity for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023:

## REVENUE:

Donations-	
Donations greater than \$999.99	\$25,000.00
Donations \$100 to \$999.99	17,467.90
Donations less than \$100	<u>13,847.19</u>
Total Donations	56,315.09
Grants	36,400.00
Interest Income	37.35
Newsbreak Revenue	93.42
Advertising & Sponsorships	<u>47,244.49</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<u>140,090.35</u>

## EXPENSES:

Payroll	73,489.72
Payroll Taxes	6,261.00
Bank Charges	226.88
Merchant Account Fees	1,243.68
Quarterly Administration Fees	341.62
Mailing	5,905.96
Payroll Processing	720.45
Legal	5,030.00
Insurance	5,119.08
Printing & Reproduction	14,632.17
Design Services	2,450.00
Stipends	25,329.00
Office Supplies	488.02
Storage Rent and Supplies	458.49
Dues	460.00
Meetings & Training	761.56
Shoptalk conference	8,577.98
Development	1,194.85
Technology	3,007.22
Minnesota and IRS Filing Fees	<u>274.80</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>155,972.48</u>

**EXPENSES IN EXCESS OF REVENUE** (\$15,882.13)

60%

Increase in contributions  
from FY 2021-22

81%

Increase in revenue  
from FY 2021-22

83%

Payroll increase as  
EPLN expanded staff

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

The statement of financial position is another term for the balance sheet. The statement lists the assets, liabilities, and equity of the organization on June 30, 2023, the final day of EPLN's most recent fiscal year:

## ASSETS

### CURRENT ASSETS:

Checking - Flagship Bank	\$19,666.02
Cash held by EP Comm. Foundation	<u>24,644.66</u>
Total Cash	44,310.68
Accounts Receivable	3,414.00
Prepaid Insurance	<u>146.92</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$47,871.60</u></b>

## LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

### LIABILITIES:

Accounts Payable	\$4,275.96
Contract Liabilities	<u>3,222.00</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>7,497.96</u>

### NET ASSETS:

Unrestricted Net Assets, Beginning	56,255.77
Current Year Income (Loss)	<u>(15,882.13)</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>40,373.64</u>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$47,871.60</u></b>
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237

Number of new  
donors in FY 2022-23

\$145

Average donation  
amount in FY 2022-23

1,019

Stories posted to  
website in FY 2022-23

## DID YOU KNOW?

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Eden Prairie Local News is required to submit to the IRS an annual report called the Form 990, which documents the organization's activities, policies, and community benefit. You can find EPLN's latest Form 990 on its website, [www.eplocalnews.org](http://www.eplocalnews.org), under "About EPLN."



# NONPROFIT NEWS AS A SOLUTION

## EPLN IS REVERSING A TREND, LEARNING FROM OTHERS

The loss of Eden Prairie's 46-year-old weekly newspaper in 2020 might have been a crippling event, were it not for a small group of citizens who saw a way forward: nonprofit news.

Thus Eden Prairie Local News, a nonprofit, nonpartisan publication, owned and run by Eden Prairie residents, was born.

Nonprofit news organizations have greater flexibility and public trust than the traditional for-profit model for news. Community philanthropy, donations, and grants, in combination with traditional revenue sources like advertising, increase the chances of long-term financial health and sustainability.

In the 2022 report, "The State of Local News," it was noted that one-fifth of U.S. citizens live in news deserts, with very limited access to local news, or in communities at risk of becoming news deserts.

That's a trend EPLN is helping to reverse. The number of nonprofit newsrooms in the United States has more than doubled in the last five years, and EPLN is among them.



*Shoptalk participants from six nonprofit news organizations from across the country gather at the Eden Prairie Library in February 2023.*

EPLN helped gather and host 15 leaders from six different nonprofit, hyperlocal news organizations in February 2023 to share and learn critical information.

Called "Shoptalk," it included valuable discussion about the financial health and survival of nonprofit news, and how to nurture resilience and sustainability in our organizations.

The work continues. "I email with some of the Shoptalk members regularly to exchange ideas and get advice," says EPLN CEO/Publisher Steve Schewe.



# INVESTMENTS IN JOURNALISM

**EPLN and the Eden Prairie community overall are investing in great local journalism. Here are a few examples from 2022-23:**

- A grant from the League of Women Voters Eden Prairie/Minnetonka/Hopkins helped fund EPLN's efforts to educate voters before the 2022 general election.
- The national nonprofit-news funding effort called NewsMatch allowed EPLN to double the financial impact of local donations.
- Grants from the Eden Prairie Community Foundation and Eden Prairie A.M. Rotary funded a series of articles on a critical local topic: teens and mental health.

Support like this is helping transform what local news is all about, allowing Eden Prairie journalists to fully explore the important topics that stimulate community discussion.

Funders like the League of Women Voters, the Community Foundation, and A.M. Rotary recognize that funding local, nonprofit news is an investment that makes for a better Eden Prairie.

This philanthropic support makes local news sustainable, ensuring that Eden Prairie will continue to be one of the best -- and most informed -- small cities in America.

Are you someone who would like to invest in Eden Prairie journalism? Contact us by calling 612-562-8259 or donate at [www.eplocalnews.org](http://www.eplocalnews.org).

PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOMES
2022 Voter Guide	Special print publication with help from the League of Women Voters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large EP voter turnout</li> <li>• Better informed community</li> </ul>
NewsMatch and year-end fundraising	Local donations to EPLN matched by national initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local gifts plus national match equaled successful campaign</li> </ul>
Investigation of teen mental health in Eden Prairie	Fall 2023 project funded by EP Community Foundation, A.M. Rotary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuable information on mental health for teens and their parents</li> </ul>

# COMING UP

News by its very nature is unpredictable. But many of EPLN's activities are not. Here are a couple of the nonprofit's upcoming activities. We invite you to take part.

## ANNUAL MEETING

**Attend our Annual Meeting to get a picture of EPLN's progress in 2022-23**

"The State of EPLN" will be addressed in the nonprofit's annual meeting from 9-10 a.m. Monday, Oct. 16, in the downstairs Heritage Rooms of the Eden Prairie City Center, 8080 Mitchell Road. Hear from EPLN leaders about the news organization's performance and highlights from 2022-23, and take home a copy of EPLN's Impact Report. The public is invited to this free event.

## AI TOWN HALL

**Artificial intelligence is the subject of our town meeting 5-6:30 p.m. Oct. 26**

EPLN's fall 2023 activities include a town meeting titled "AI: Hype, Harm, or Hope?" from 5-6:30 p.m. Oct. 26 in the Performing Arts Center of Central Middle School, 8025 School Road. Learn more and buy tickets at [eplocalnews.org/ai-town-hall](https://eplocalnews.org/ai-town-hall)



## NEWSMATCH

**This national fundraising match has transformed public-service journalism**

EPLN's fundraising campaign at the end of each calendar year has the word "NewsMatch" attached to it. That's because NewsMatch is a national dollar-for-dollar, matching-funds program that doubles the impact of local donations each November and December. It has helped transform how Eden Prairie residents support public-service journalism through EPLN. So, please consider making a year-end donation that qualifies for this national match.

## 2024 & BEYOND

**Another Voter Guide, a 100th anniversary, and so much more**

The good news is that EPLN is in a growth mode. Already in fiscal year 2023-24, the organization has bolstered its education reporting and added an advertising sales representative. Look for another Voter Guide before the 2024 general election. And, as always, we'll be covering interesting and timely topics, including in March the 100th anniversary of Eden Prairie's consolidated school. We look forward to serving you in 2024 and beyond.

# THANK YOU, EPLN DONORS

In accordance with nonprofit guidelines and public transparency, we share the names of donors to EPLN for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023. EPLN apologizes in advance for any errors or admissions. Our donors:

Adolph, Kenneth/Helen  
Ahmann, Marcelline  
Albrecht-Foss Foundation  
Ahlcrona, Cheryl  
Anderson, Diane  
Anderson, Greg/Penny  
Anderson, Joan  
Anderson, Mary  
Anderson, Rodney/Julane  
Andis, Jennifer  
Aplin, Jan  
Armstrong, Craig/Janice  
Asleson, Brian  
Autio, Wendy  
Backes, Linda  
Balfanz, Bruce  
Barnes, Michelle  
Barreiro, Terri  
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Beckman, Geraldine  
Beckman, Marion  
Bell, Katherine  
Bender, Barbara J.  
Berge, Kelly/Todd  
Berglund, David  
Berkholz, Janna  
Beusen, Jon/Denise  
Beutell, Tim/Beth  
Bitter, James  
Blackbaud Giving Fund

Bladow, Shelly  
Bloch, Ashley  
Blomquist, Brian  
Bluml, Kevin  
Bognanni, Kathleen  
Bolles, Marsi  
Bollingmo, Rebecca  
Bomben, Kenneth/Carol  
Borchardt, Sara  
Boria, Nancy  
Borine, Sharon/Carl  
Brase, Laurie  
Brenner, Kathryn  
Brown, Rolf  
Boyd, Jill  
Breimeier, Rachel  
Bull, Leslie  
Bushey, John  
Byrne, Ann/Pat  
Campbell, Wendy  
Canakes, Eileen  
Canham, Bradley  
Carey, Jody  
Carter, Ellen  
Chester-Jones, Ann  
Chisenhall, Patricia  
Christianson, Julie  
Clark, Susan  
Clay, Barbara  
Cofer, Marvin/Wahletha  
Colford, Steve  
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Conrad, Jan  
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Dixit, Vijay  
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Golden, Jerry/Joyce  
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# THANK YOU, EPLN DONORS

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 Hoerle, Michael/Ellen  
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 Hookom, Duane/Laura  
 Hoppe, Carol  
 Horn, Margaret  
 Horstman, William  
 Hosek, Carol  
 Hoveland, Barbara  
 Hughes, Gordon/Judy  
 Humphrey, Katherine  
 Hurtig, Wayne  
 Husaby, Will  
 Hutchins, Bruce/Terry  
 Hymans, Ben  
 Jacobson, Donald

Jain, Deepak  
 James, Katherine  
 Janzen, Robin/Jerome  
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 Jester, Laura  
 Johnson, Brian Paul  
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 Kaihoi  
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 Kammer, Judy/Mark Voorhees  
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 Kissner, Carol/Claude Buettner  
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 Koivumaki, Molly  
 Kraemer, Sandra  
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 Langsdorf  
 Larson, Cheryl  
 Larson, Mark  
 Larson, Rachel  
 Lee, Daniel  
 Lehti, Jussi  
 Leppart, Virginia  
 Leviton, Judy  
 Lind, Dennis/Jeanine  
 Lindahl, David  
 Lindahl, Jim  
 Lindahl, Steve  
 Link, Holly  
 Lions Club - EP Chapter  
 Lions Tap

Loon, Doug/Jenifer  
 Lorensen, Katie  
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 Lotzow, Gendalyn  
 Lubratovich, Renee  
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 Lukens for Mayor  
 Lund, Nancy  
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 Mandel, Reid A.  
 Marsch, Kari  
 Maudin, Timothy  
 McCarthy, Beth  
 McGuire, Michael  
 McMartin, Joyce  
 Meier, Joyce  
 Meier, Mary  
 Mensing, Douglas  
 Meyer, Jason/JoAnn  
 Michelle Fund (Joe/Carol Stoeber)  
 Midtbo, Thomas  
 Miller, Linda  
 Minta, Michael  
 Morton, Phil  
 Myhre, Joyce  
 Narayanan, PG  
 Nehl, Jim/Cheri  
 Nelson, Donald  
 Nelson, Kathy  
 Nelson, Paul  
 Nelson, Sarah  
 Neville, Richard/Janet  
 Nodland, Sonja  
 Nyberg, Kenneth  
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 Ohnstad, Susan  
 Olajos, Imre  
 Olson, Gregory P.  
 Olson, Heather  
 Olson, Katherine

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Rezak, Kathy  
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Rice, Timothy  
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Roberts, Thomas/Vickie  
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Rolfsrud, Stanley

Ronning, Jill  
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Rule, George  
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Rushdy, Jamal/Renee  
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Sandvick, Dianne  
Sauer, Robert  
Schell, George  
Schewe, Sarah  
Schewe Family Fund  
Schewe, Stephen/Beryl  
Shields, Victoria  
Schimelpfenig  
Schlief, Mary Beth  
Schmidt, Robert  
Schmitt, Melissa/Robert  
Scholtz, Jill  
Schuette, Carol  
Schultz, Allison  
Seebinger, Fred/Donna  
Shipp, Roger  
Smith, Michael  
Smythe, Barbara C.  
Snow, Larry  
Staebell, Stephanie  
Steele, Stephen J.  
Stein Family Fund  
Steinoien, P./K.  
Stene, Erik  
Stevens, Gary/Marilyn  
Stewart, Grace  
Stole, Joan  
Stone, Ken  
Strate, Jeffrey/Carol  
Strezo, Amy  
Strom, James/Elaine  
Sudak, Stuart  
Sundlof, Jean  
Swanson, Josh  
Sweeney, Deborah  
Swift, Karen  
Terwilliger, Roy/Mary Lou

Their, Stacy  
Theis, Bonnie  
Thomas, Michael  
Thompson, Jonathan  
Thompson, Tom/Susan  
Thurk, Robert  
Tilman, Daniel  
Toomey, Lisa  
Tornquist, Claudia Waterloo  
Truempi, Shirley A.  
Truong, Pham  
Tyhacz, John  
Tysk, Autumn/David  
Urbanski, John/Jennifer  
Vanni, Patricia/Peter  
Van Schoonenveveld, Hugh  
Vevle, Karen  
Von Ruden-Doll, Angie  
Wagner, Christa  
Wagner, Michael/Janet  
Wagner, Nancy  
Wahlquist, Harry  
Walton, Jeff/H./Christi H.  
Ward, Richard & Capps, Martha  
Wassink, Darwin  
Wassink, Pat  
Watkins, Gary  
Weaver, Susan  
Weber, Mark/Roma  
Weiher, Shannon  
Weinrich, Nancy  
Weiss, Harvey  
Whitcomb, Jay  
Wieland, Carolyn  
Wiley, Kim  
Williams, Sharon  
Williamson, Robert/Margaret  
Willett, Melanie  
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Wilson, Thomas  
Withrow, Stephen  
Wood, Brenda  
Woodhouse, Kirt/Nicole

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Yanes, Ronald  
Zenk, Colleen  
Zetzman, Skip  
Zinn-Caulfield, Becky

#### **GRANTORS**

Eden Prairie A.M. Rotary Club  
Eden Prairie Community Fndtn.  
Fund for Nonprofit News at The  
Miami Foundation  
Institute for Nonprofit News  
League of Women Voters  
Mighty Cause Charitable Fndtn.

#### **ADVERTISERS**

(Many of these are candidates  
who advertised in our 2022 Voter

Guide.)

Casper for School Board  
Carlie for House  
Chase for MN  
Cwodzinski Campaign  
Debjyoti, D.D.  
Eden Prairie Schools  
First Western Bank  
Flagship Bank  
Flagstone/Presbyterian Homes  
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Freiberg, Mark  
HIFS  
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Jarvis Jones for Hennepin Cty.  
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Ron Case for Mayor  
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Sever Fall Festival  
SouthWest Transit  
Steve Bartz for EP  
Stubbs for School Board  
Tom Weiler for Congress  
Washburn McReavy Funeral  
Homes  
World Auto Repair

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

EPLN cannot exist without local support. Here's how  
you can help:

#### **READ**

- Become a regular reader of [www.eplocalnews.org](http://www.eplocalnews.org).
- Subscribe to our daily or weekly email newsletters.

#### **DONATE**

- Click on "Donate" at [www.eplocalnews.org](http://www.eplocalnews.org).
- Mail a donation check to Eden Prairie Local News,  
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#### **VOLUNTEER**

- Have expertise that can help EPLN? Become a  
member of the board or a committee. People are  
particularly needed for the Community Advisory  
Task Force so that all voices are heard.
- Join our growing contingent of reporters and  
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#### **Eden Prairie Local News**

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612-562-8259  
[www.eplocalnews.org](http://www.eplocalnews.org)  
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# 2,033

Stories posted since  
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EPLN website page views July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

## PICTURES FROM EPLN



- 1 Photo by Mark Weber, from "It's been that kind of winter," published March 19, 2023.
- 2 Photo by Gillian Holte, from "Photo gallery: Ethiopian Fest of Minnesota," published Sept. 7, 2022.
- 3 Photo by Jim Bayer, from "Rowing Bryant Lake," published Aug. 2, 2022.
- 4 Photo by Stuart Sudak, from "Asia Mall shines in spotlight during Small Business Week visit by Second Gentleman," published May 4, 2023.
- 5 Photo by Rick Olson, from "Eden Prairie's dominance over Farmington honors Eagles' past," published Sept. 11, 2022.