WELCOME TO

Luverne



Luverne
Love the life!

EXPLORE MINNESOTA

2027 Welcome to Luverne Visitor Guide

TOLLEFSON PUBLISHING

Verne the Patriot by Heather Johnson

Go Big. *Discover Luverne.*

Looking for a destination that's anything but ordinary? Start with something BIG—really BIG!

Meet Verne, the **World's Largest Nutcracker!** Standing an astonishing 65 feet, 7½ inches tall, Verne towers over Luverne and makes one unforgettable photo op. But don't stop at the giant—go inside the History Center and discover more than 7,500 whimsical nutcrackers, with no two alike!

Make a day, extend your play, and leave with memories that are anything but ordinary. In Luverne, the fun doesn't stop at Verne.



GO WILD at the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, where more than 2,500 acres invite you to explore the beauty of the prairie.



GET MOVING on 17 miles of paved trails—perfect for two feet or two wheels.



SEE NATURE THROUGH A MASTER'S LENS at Jim Brandenburg's gallery.



EAT LOCAL at one of Luverne's charming eateries—or raise a glass at the local brewery.



CATCH A SHOW at the Historic Palace Theatre or settle in for a movie beneath the stars at the Verne Drive-In.



HONOR THE BRAVE at the Herreid Military Museum and discover their incredible stories.



SHOP SMALL and browse unique local stores filled with treasures you won't find anywhere else.

COME FOR VERNE. STAY FOR THE *Adventure*

From prairie trails to local treasures, fascinating history to unforgettable experiences, there's always something new to discover in Luverne, MN.

Luverne MINNESOTA *Love the life!*

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Scan to Learn More!

Find Your Place in *Luverne.*

Picture a place where kids ride bikes to the park, neighbors greet you by name, Friday nights bring the community together, and the great outdoors is just minutes from your doorstep. With great schools, quality healthcare, trusted childcare, and outdoor adventures just minutes away, Luverne offers everything families need to grow and thrive. Here, you can build a career, raise a family, explore your interests and enjoy the simple pleasures of small-town living.



LEARN & GROW

Consistent and reliable childcare options help children thrive and families flourish.



MAKE ROOM FOR LIFE

Enjoy parks, trails, recreation and open spaces that invite you to get outside, stay active and slow down.

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Luverne Area Chamber & CVB

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

Visitors | Residents | Businesses | Organizations

Through Information & Resources

At the Rock County Courthouse Square | Veterans Memorial Building

213 East Luverne Street | Luverne MN 56156

P:507.283.4061 | Email: luvernechamber@co.rock.mn.us

Www.LuverneChamber.com

Monday-Friday: 8 am to 5 pm | Saturday: 10 am to 5 pm

It is our pleasure to welcome you to Luverne, the Gateway to Minnesota.

A city of 5,000 progressive citizens, the area boasts superior schools, a robust economy, clean water, fresh air, safe neighborhoods, excellent medical care, convenient transportation services and a contagious community spirit.

Luverne offers many benefits that make it an attractive place to live — parks, culture, arts, entertainment, sports, and recreation. We are a community of families deeply rooted in values and an undying commitment to building a city we can all be proud of.

We are excited about Luverne — both its past and its future, and we welcome you to discover the excitement and enjoy it for yourself.

ON THE COVER

VERNE THE PATRIOT

Verne the Patriot is happy to have his head on straight! After almost three years of planning, Verne is now standing 73 feet over Luverne. Read more about the reasons behind Luverne's nutcracker obsession and details on Verne on pages 54 - 55.







Betty Mann, curator of the original collection of nutcrackers now on display at the History Center, poses with the nutcracker progress in July 2025.

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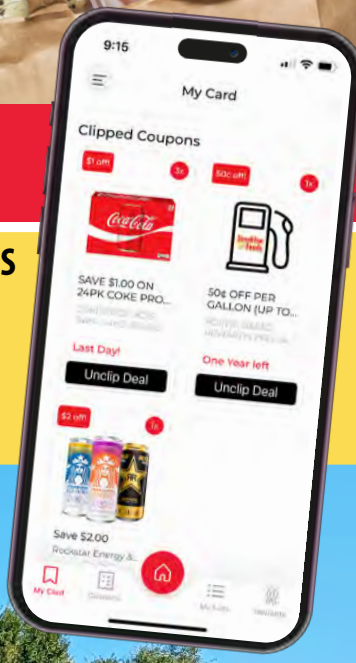
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LUVERNE CITY PARK

This beautiful wooded park serves as a scenic welcome to travelers entering Luverne from the east. Nestled along the Rock River, it offers several well-maintained playgrounds, an open shelter and shelter house, ball diamonds, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, the Ashby Trail bike path, and much more. To get there, travel east on Main Street over the river and enter the park on the south side of the road.

The city of Luverne also offers fully equipped pocket parks throughout the city, giving residential neighborhoods quick access to outdoor recreation near their homes. There are 11 pocket parks scattered strategically in neighborhoods all over Luverne.




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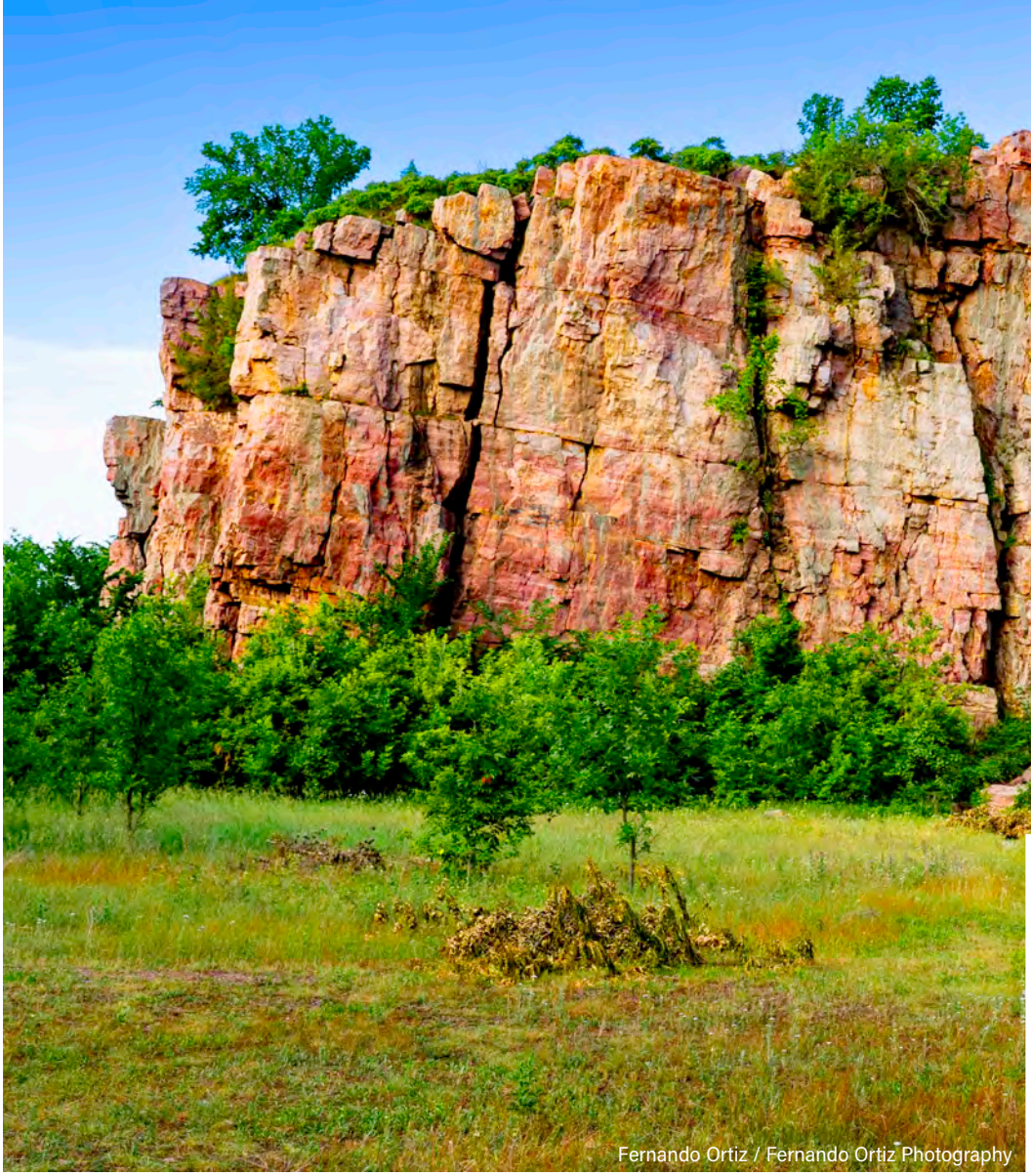
BLUE MOUNDS
STATE PARK


Ashley Mundt


Fernando Ortiz / Fernando Ortiz Photography


Heather Johnson




Fernando Ortiz / Fernando Ortiz Photography



Blue Mounds State Park is one of the largest prairie parks in Minnesota. The park office and main campground entrance are four miles north of Luverne on Highway 75. The phone number is 507-283-6050 for reservations and information.

The park's approximately 1,500 acres of prairie and grassland preserves a wide array of rare and common plants and wildlife.

The park is home to over 100 bison that graze peacefully on the prairie. The herd is among the most genetically pure in the country, and the park's Bison Touring Vehicle allows visitors to get an up close look at the rare creatures in their natural habitat. The guided tours also offer fascinating information about prairie habitat and grassland native species.

Most of the park's prairie sits atop a massive outcrop of rock known as Sioux quartzite. The rock outcrop slopes gently up from the surrounding countryside but terminates abruptly in a spectacular cliff line. The cliff, one and one-half miles long and at some points 90 feet in height, provides a panoramic view of the countryside and is also used by a number of rock climbers from throughout the Midwest. There are climbing opportunities for all skill levels.

Thirteen miles of hiking trails take you along the cliffs, around the park's upper lake, into the oak woods, and through the prairie.

Three miles of newly reconstructed bike trails in the park connect with the excellent county and city of Luverne trails for a wonderful biking experience.

Blue Mounds offers you the opportunity to see, hear and feel Minnesota's prairie environment firsthand. Here you can experience tall grasses and colorful wildflowers swaying in the wind or witness the power and color of a summer prairie thunderstorm rolling in from the west.

The mystery of the Blue Mounds is not restricted to the cliffs. At the Blue Mounds' southern end is a 1,250-foot-long line of rocks aligned in an east-west direction. Who built it and why is unknown. It is known that on the first day of spring and fall the sunrise and sunset are lined up on this stone alignment. Visitors can hike to the alignment to ponder the well-marked sunrises of spring and fall.

Blue Mounds State Park features 71 semi-modern campsites, 53 with electrical hookups and 14 cart-in sites suitable for tents.

Throughout the year the park naturalist provides a variety of programs both at the park amphitheater area and at various locations in the park.

Find out more information by visiting the park's website at tinyurl.com/bluemounds.

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Rock County Sheriff's Office

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Non-Emergency Line: 507-283-5000

Those new to the community can utilize our **ENHANCED 911 SYSTEM** for emergencies (fire, accidents or ambulance), by making sure the Sheriff's Office has your name, address and phone number - especially if you move.

Everything is kept confidential and cannot be given out to anyone.



1000 N Blue Mound Ave, Luverne, MN 56156
Non-Emergency Line: 507-283-5000
Rock County, Minnesota Sheriffs Office



LUVERNE AQUATICS & FITNESS



Luverne Aquatics & Fitness provides the community and surrounding area with a recently renovated/expanded state-of-the-art facility.

The aquatics area has three indoor pools to enjoy.

The main pool is 200,000 gallons with a starting depth of 3 1/2 feet to 11 feet deep. A diving board, climbing wall, and other special pool equipment makes it fun for the entire family.

A separate wading pool is kept at a warm 90 degrees to ensure smaller swimmers can enjoy splashing and playing.

The hot tub is a perfect place to relax and soothe away any aches or pains. With a temp of 102 and robust jets, it doesn't take long to soak your troubles away.

During the summer months you can experience the warm, sunny days with a top-of-the-line splash pad with various water features appropriate for the very littlest toddlers to the high-energy troupers. Shade or sun – you pick the place to sit back and enjoy the action.

The 24/7 fitness center has been updated and designed to be welcoming and comfortable with an abundance of superior commercial-grade fitness equipment.

The weight area contains free weights, weight machines, and much more. It appeals to everyone, from the very beginner to the most skilled and proficient lifter.

When entering the cardio area, you will be amazed that everything you need to get a complete cardio workout is available. Neither quality nor quantity was spared to build an area constructed to appeal to your entire body.

The multi-purpose room offers a spacious area for a variety of activities, including many infrared hot classes, individual training, stretching and group fitness - for every age and ability. The private party room is available for any occasion - no matter the season!

A variety of trainers are on staff to assist you, whether it is on land or in the water, and a variety of memberships plus daily prices are available to choose from.

More information is available at cityofluverne.org/laf or give us a call at 507-449-5036. We will be happy and eager to assist you.

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BLUE MOUNDS

Blue Mounds Trail hike • bike • explore

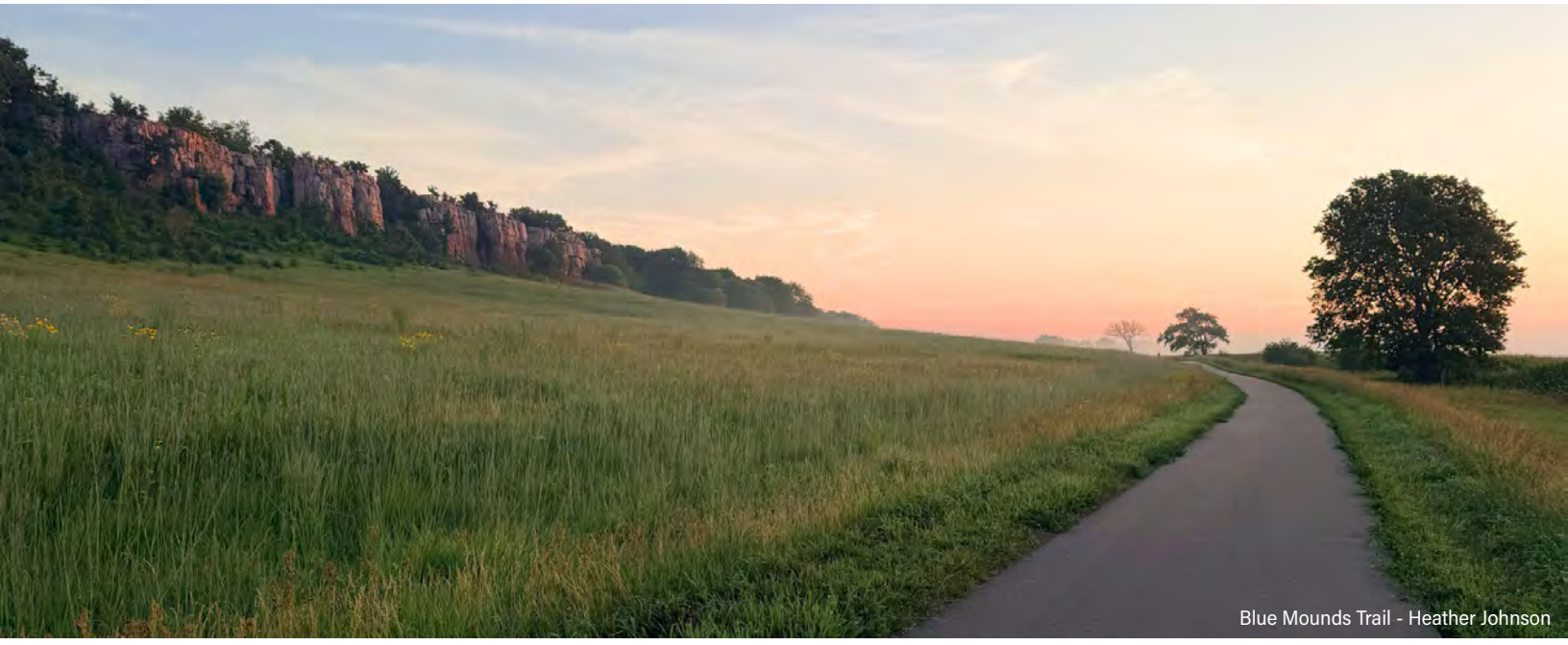
The Blue Mounds Trail, a multi-purpose bike and pedestrian trail, was originally completed in 2003 and recently reconstructed in 2025. The six-mile path officially starts at the corner of Blue Mound Avenue and Main Street and connects Luverne with the Blue Mounds State Park. It features open scenery, tree-lined shade and a beautiful view of the Blue Mounds cliff line. It allows access to bicyclers to enjoy all the park has to offer.

LUVERNE E-BIKES
rent and ride
Eight E-Bikes are available seasonally at LAF
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THE LOOP

Luverne Loop hike • bike • explore

The Luverne Loop offers just over seven miles of trail around the outskirts of the city. The paved trail connects the city to the six-mile Blue Mounds Trail that goes over and around the park, with an option to branch off to the top of the 90-foot cliff line for a panoramic view of Luverne. By connecting to the Blue Mounds Trail, the Luverne Loop provides residents and visitors of all ages with a safe, natural place for healthy recreation and transportation that connects them to areas of interest throughout Luverne and Rock County.



Blue Mounds Trail - Heather Johnson

ROLL ON

Roll On Luverne is a bike loan program supported by Minnesota SHIP, Luverne Convention & Visitors Bureau and local sponsors.

The program offers 15 universal bikes (eight adult, four youth, two adult trikes and one adult tandem) available FREE ON LOAN for public use any time of the day or night.

In partnership with GrandStay Hotel & Suites, the bikes are available any time of the day or night by contacting the front desk of the hotel.

Borrowers simply have to sign a waiver and leave a credit card or driver's license as collateral until the bike is returned.

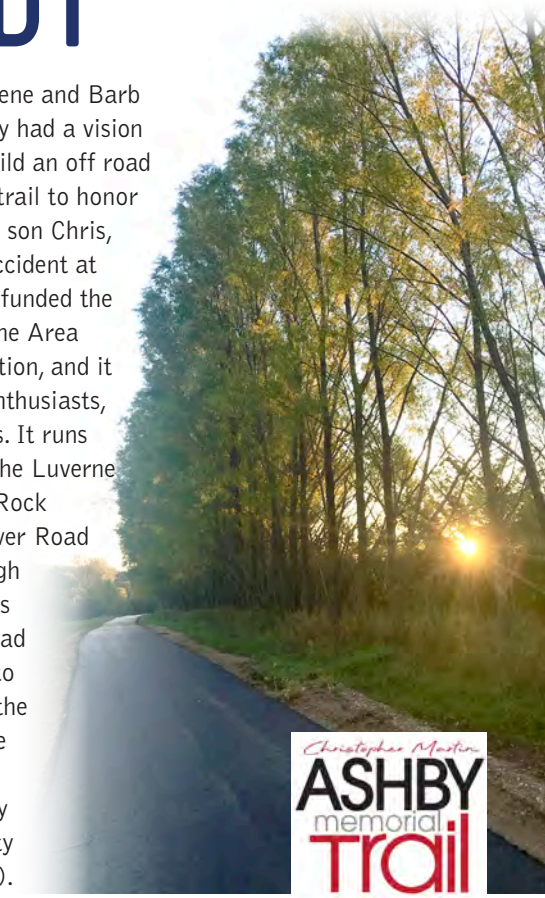
Enjoy a ride on the scenic Blue Mounds Trail or Luverne LOOP as you "Roll On Luverne."

Sponsors include: Betty Mann, Den Herder Construction, First Farmers & Merchants Bank, Luverne Area Chamber, Luverne Initiatives for Tomorrow, Luverne Physical Education Teachers, Luverne Rotary Club, Papik Motors, Sanford Health Luverne, Security Savings Bank and Those Blasted Things.



ASHBY

Gene and Barb Ashby had a vision to build an off road bike trail to honor and remember their son Chris, who died in a car accident at age 16. The Ashbys funded the trail with the Luverne Area Community Foundation, and it is open for biking enthusiasts, walkers and runners. It runs from the bridge at the Luverne City Park near the Rock River east along River Road Campground, through many wooded curves and along the railroad berm looking back to a beautiful view of the east side of the Blue Mounds State Park cliff line and the city of Luverne to County Road 4 (1.95 miles).







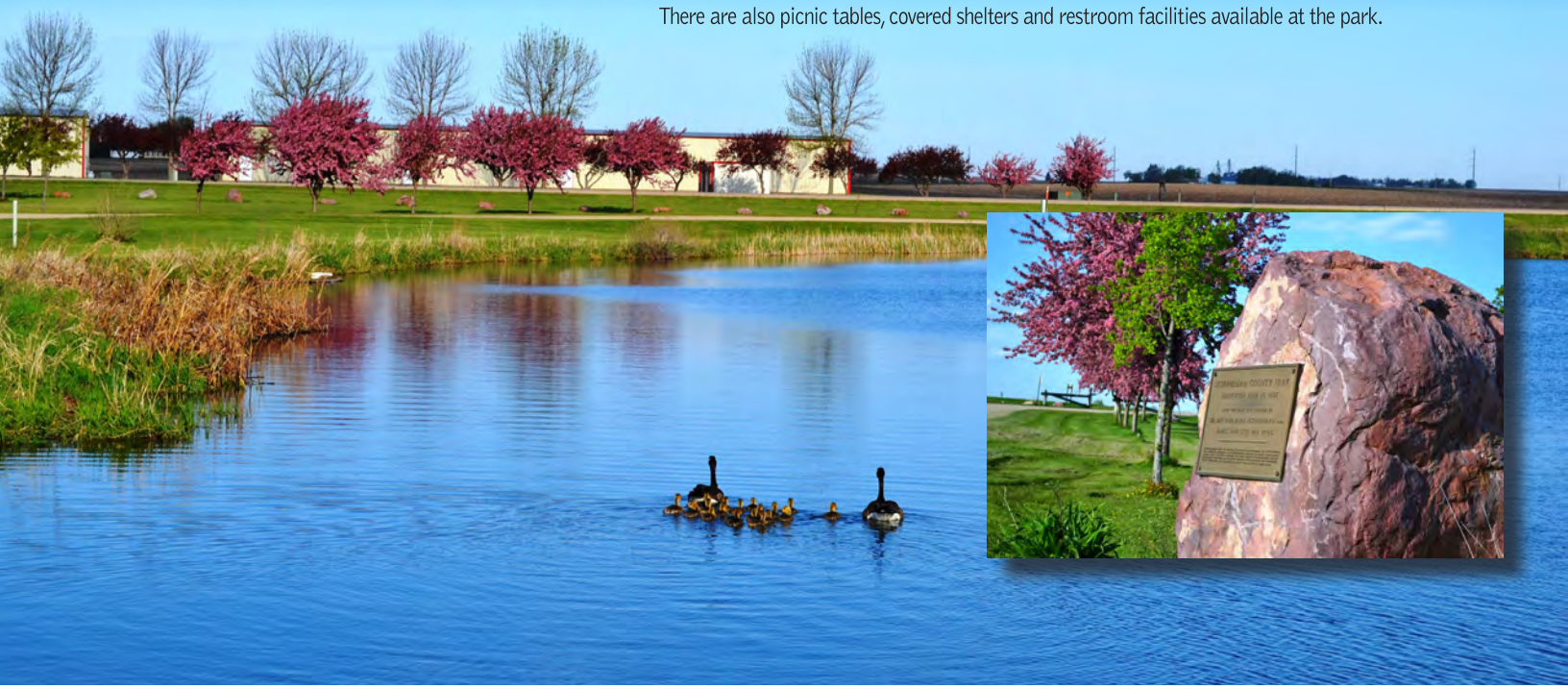
SCHONEMAN PARK

Schoneman Park is a county park located south of Luverne on Highway 75. The park is maintained by the county and provides fishing, picnic areas and nature walks around the larger ponds that have been developed for nature observance.

Throughout the spring, summer and fall, the park has become home to a flock of Canada geese which provide entertainment to people of all ages. They wait for the arrival of the geese and watch the young develop into mature geese that leave with others as they migrate south in the fall.

The park is a popular fishing spot with a floating dock that has been developed to allow youngsters, adults and even those with disabilities the opportunity to fish. Ice fishing is also popular.

At the south end of the park an observation tower allows visitors to view the entire park from the top. There are also picnic tables, covered shelters and restroom facilities available at the park.





815 West Edgehill St.

Love the LAKE

THE LAKE is a place for people to go to and enjoy fishing, playing volleyball, horseshoes, having bonfires and playing at the beach. Once a gravel pit at the west end of Edgehill Street, the spring-fed body of water has become a local favorite for summer and winter recreation. The beach has been groomed as a public swimming area, a dock and fishing point have been established and work is underway to improve parking lots and more public amenities. The DNR stocks the water with fish, and local anglers have reported sizeable catches in both summer and ice fishing outings. Campsites and cabins are available to rent. See page 34 and the Luverne Campground advertisement for more information.





BLUE MOUND
ICE ARENA

The Blue Mound Ice Arena is used year-round by local hockey and figure skating clubs and teams from around the area, in addition to the public.

The building is a source of pride in the community and is ranked as one of the finest ice facilities in the area. The Luverne Hockey Association has taken responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the building and has continually improved the arena with bleachers, heating, locker rooms, concessions and a variety of other improvements.

A two-story 112-by-32-foot addition in 2013 expanded space in the entry and concession areas and added two handicap-accessible restrooms. Also, a new hockey dryland training room allows for off-ice workouts for stick handling, plyometrics and cardiovascular work.

The building can be rented for other uses throughout the year and is often used for special events in the community. During the winter season we encourage visitors to call the arena for open skating times.

The Blue Mound Ice Arena can be reached at 507-449-9138 or visit luvernehockey.org.

The Blue Mound Figure Skaters host an annual figure skating show in March. Luverne High School made an appearance in the girls' state hockey championships in 2026.



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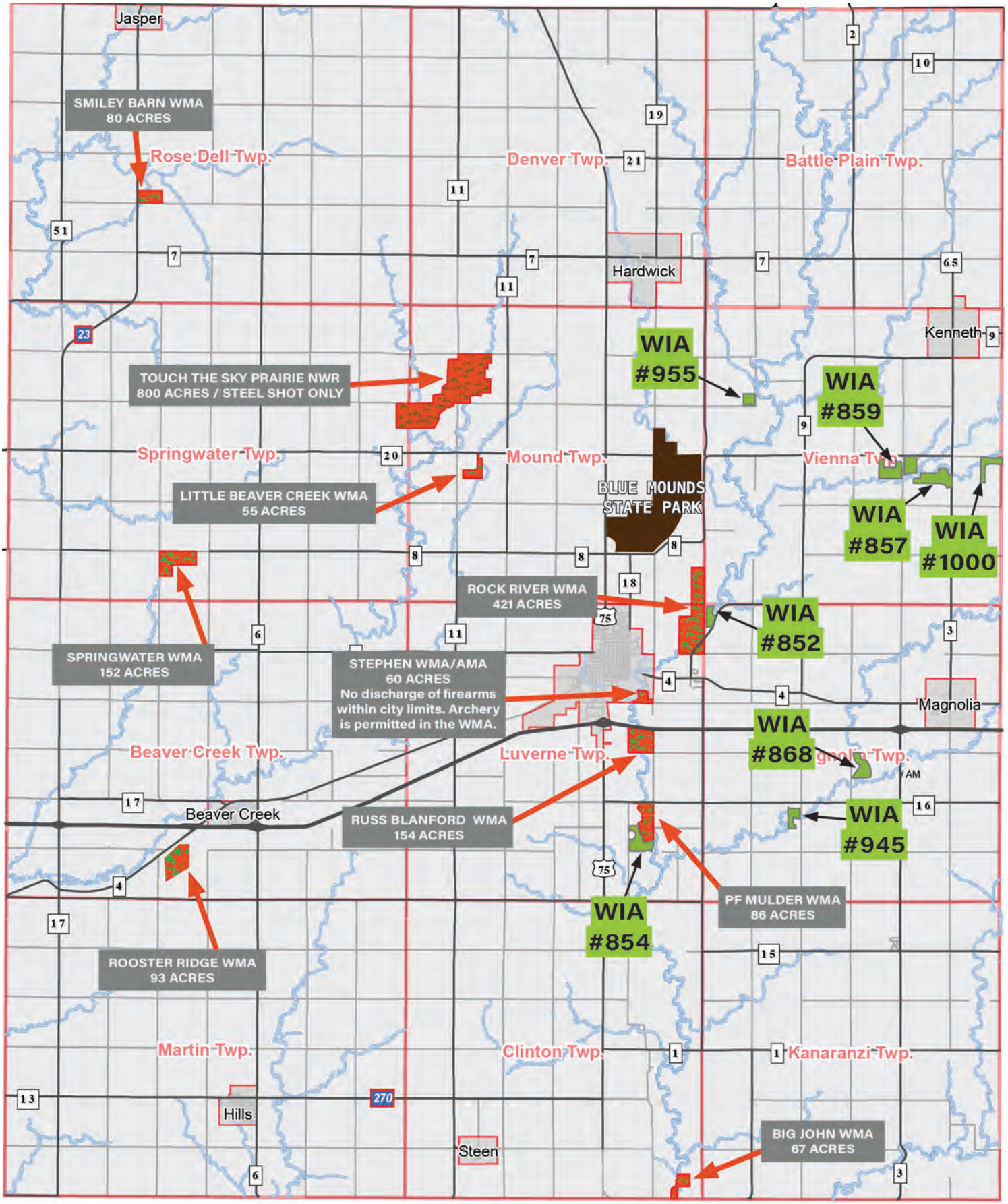
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ROCK COUNTY SPORTSMAN'S CLUB

The Rock County Sportman's Club dates back to the turn of the last century, but its current location — 40 acres near the Rock River just west of the golf course — dates to the 1930s. The clubhouse itself is fashioned from a former World War II barracks that was moved here from Sioux Falls. Today, the Rock County Sportsman's Club has roughly 70 members, and on any given Tuesday night league shoot, about 60 show up. Call Scott Loosbrock, 507-360-5418 , with questions about target fees, ammunition prices and yearly memberships.





HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

Rock County is home to nearly 1,900 acres of Wildlife Management Areas, providing ample opportunities for hunting enthusiasts to experience the local outdoors.

The Rock County chapter of Pheasants Forever maintains an active presence in the community, serving to connect sportsmen with each other and with resources to improve their hunting experiences.

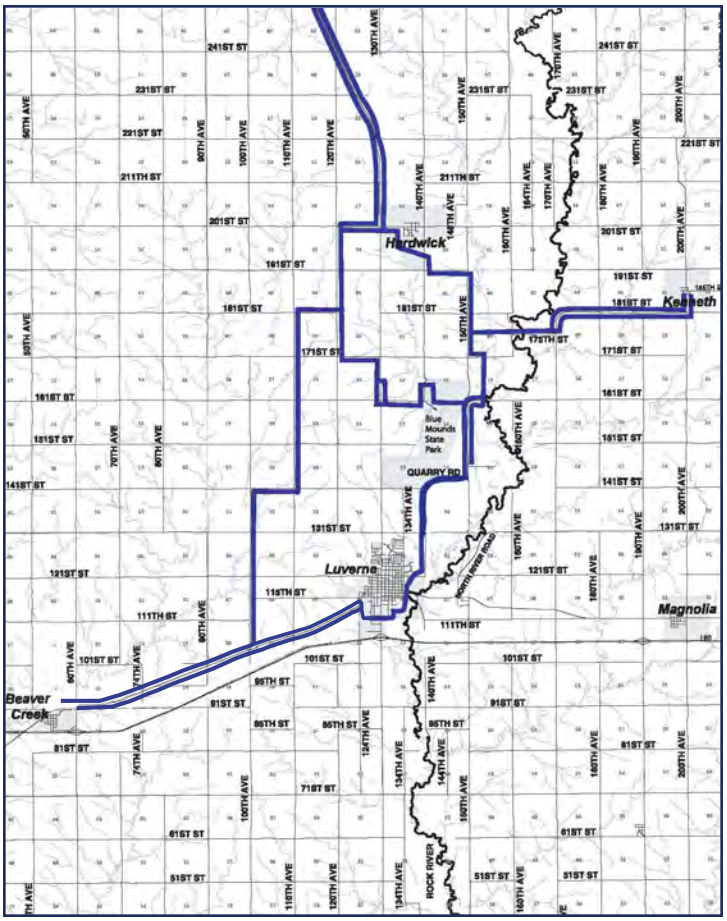
Darin Kindt can be reached at 507-920-7544 for information about Rock County Pheasants Forever and about where to find the best area public hunting grounds.



ROCK COUNTY
SNOWMOBILING

The Rock County Sno-Masters Snowmobiling Club maintains 90 miles of groomed trails throughout rural Rock County during the winter riding season. The well-maintained trail system allows for remarkable scenery amid the heart of the community's nature areas. The prettier parts of the trail wind through the Blue Mounds State Park. Riders say it's not uncommon to encounter dozens of deer on some off-road trails near the river. For information on the trail system or about the Sno-Master's Club, contact Greg Vande Velde at 507-920-5189. Maps are available at gas stations, the Luverne Chamber Office and at a local bars.





MOVIE NOSTALGIA

Enjoy a little movie magic under the stars at the Verne Drive-In Theater in Luverne. From family outings to date nights and evenings with friends, this summertime destination pairs big-screen entertainment with nostalgic charm. Settle into your vehicle and enjoy a double feature for a memorable night out.

The Verne Drive-In's history dates back to the 1950s. After closing in 1988, the theater reopened in 2000. Updates included new ticket and concession buildings, a freshly painted screen and trees planted around the grounds. Today, movie audio plays through your car radio, taking the place of the individual speakers familiar to earlier generations.

A stop at the concession stand rounds out the experience, with popcorn, candy, pizza, burgers and other favorites available. Outside food is not permitted, so come ready to enjoy your movie-night treats on-site.

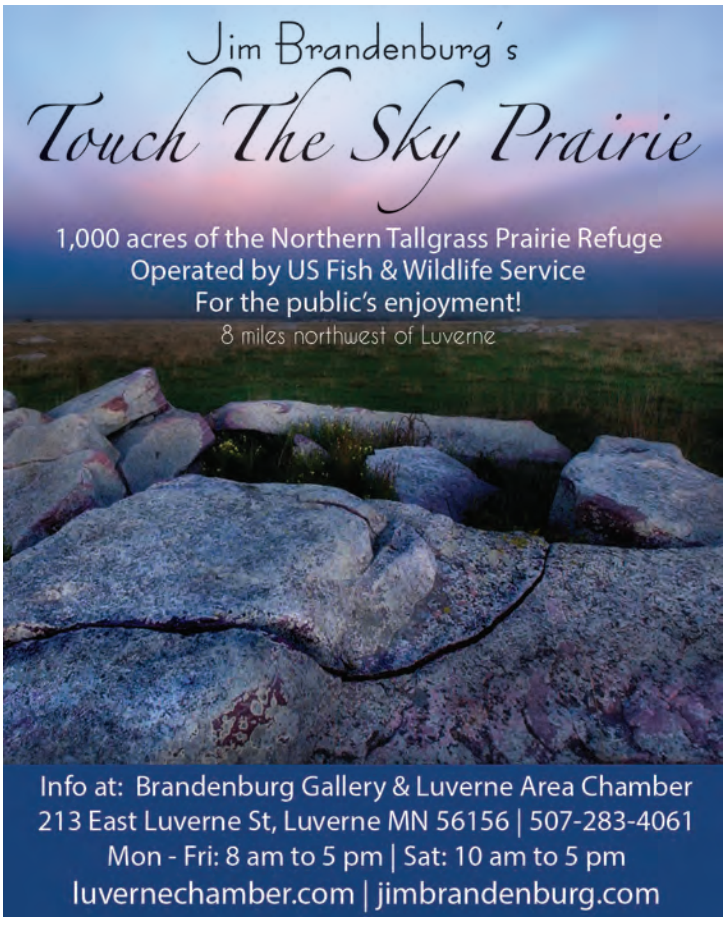
The theater operates seasonally, showing movies on Fridays and Saturdays before Memorial Day and Wednesdays through Sundays afterward. Before heading out, visit vernedriveintheater.com or check the theater's Facebook page for current movies, gate-opening times and seasonal updates.





TOUCH THE SKY PRAIRIE





Jim Brandenburg and the Brandenburg Foundation dedicated Touch the Sky Prairie in 2001 for the purposes of preserving and restoring the prairie and educating the public about its beauty and resources.

Brandenburg is well-known for his photography of wolves and National Geographic stories, as well as of Minnesota's North Woods, where he made his home. This award-winning photographer is a former farm boy who grew up near Luverne and graduated from Luverne High School in 1963.

In May 1999, Brandenburg, in cooperation with the Luverne Chamber of Commerce, opened the Brandenburg Gallery in Luverne. Over 100 of his popular and famous photographs line the walls. Brandenburg once stated that he thinks the prairie, in its own way, is as beautiful as the North Woods. He obviously still feels an attachment to it, for the Brandenburg Gallery houses more than breathtaking photographs. It is also the headquarters of the Brandenburg Prairie Foundation.

Jim and Judy Brandenburg established the Foundation to preserve and expand prairie in southwest Minnesota.




Fernando Ortiz / Fernando Ortiz Photography

Fernando Ortiz / Fernando Ortiz Photography

The Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have purchased more than 1,000 acres of untilled prairie northwest of Luverne, adjacent to the farm where Brandenburg grew up.

Heavily grazed for over a century, this area is now being restored to a healthy native North American Tallgrass Prairie.

This prairie is located northwest of the city of Luverne in Rock County, Minnesota.

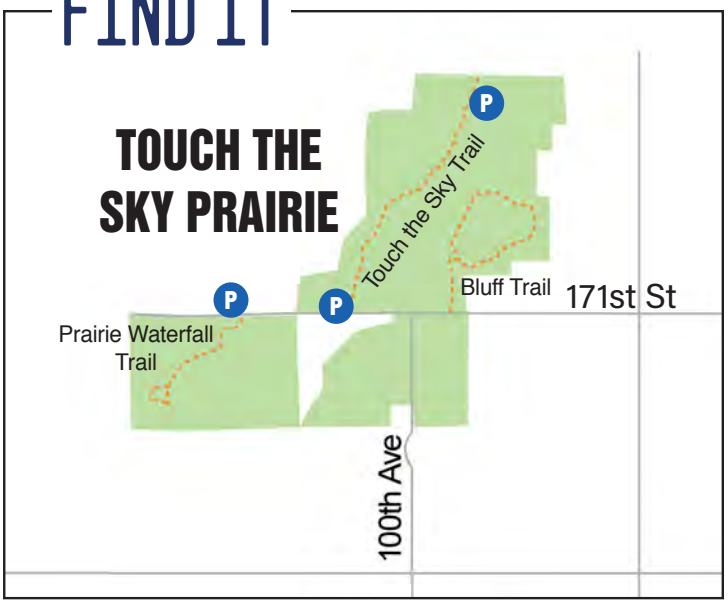
Named "Touch the Sky Prairie," it is open for the public to enjoy, with parking lots, mowed pathways and informational kiosks.

What makes an artist an artist is the ability to see what our oft-times jaded vision ignores. Viewing the photos in the Brandenburg Gallery is like taking a walk on the prairie, seeing wildlife and unexpected beauty through the eyes of an artist. Seeing what our eyes often overlook. Inviting us to open our eyes to the world around us.

Jim Brandenburg passed away in April of 2025, but his images of Touch the Sky Prairie can be enjoyed at the Brandenburg Gallery housed in the Galleries at the Rock County Courthouse Square.


Fernando Ortiz / Fernando Ortiz Photography

FIND IT



BRANDENBURG Gallery

Don't miss the Brandenburg Gallery on pages 28 - 29.


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THE WAR

On September 6, 2007, Luverne's Historic Palace Theatre hosted the world premiere of the Ken Burns' documentary film, THE WAR. The film, which critics and Burns himself declared one of his best ever, features Luverne and three other communities to tell the story of World War II from the perspective of the soldiers and their loved ones at home who lived it.

This perspective of WWII — from the bottom up, as Burns calls it — is what THE WAR documentary set out to accomplish. Quentin Aanenson's PBS film is the reason Luverne was discovered for the film, but Burns said the town and the people he met there were perfect for telling the story the way he envisioned it.

In a process that took more than six years, Burns and his producers spent time in Luverne collecting treasures from family scrapbooks and home movies, interviewing soldiers and recording testimonials from those who survived back at home without their loved ones.





Crowds gather outside the Palace Theatre on Luverne's Main Street for the 2007 world premiere of "The War."

Along the way, Burns found Al McIntosh, the late editor and publisher of the Rock County Star Herald in Luverne.

His columns detailed soldiers deploying and returning home, and the anxieties and exuberance of those experiences at the time. The columns also captured the horrifying sadness of local families receiving news that their loved ones would not be coming home. McIntosh's words narrate much of the film through the voice of actor Tom Hanks. Burns calls McIntosh the "one man Greek chorus" in the film, and those poignant wartime columns are now compiled in a book, "Selected Chaff."

As a result of the film and its spectacular world premiere, the community continues to enjoy national attention and increased awareness of its rich historical heritage.



Luverne native Quentin Aanenson's PBS documentary "Fighter Pilot's Story" launched Luverne into THE WAR series. He's pictured with his wife, Jackie, at the 2007 premiere of the Ken Burns film in Luverne.



Ken Burns pauses for a photo outside the Palace Theatre in Luverne before the premiere of "The War." Lori Sorenson photos/Star Herald







BRANDENBURG GALLERY
LUVERNE



Internationally acclaimed nature photographer Jim Brandenburg, a Luverne native who passed away in April 2025, continues to share his legacy through the gallery in his hometown where residents and visitors alike can experience his remarkable photography and enduring connection to the natural world.

The Brandenburg Gallery is managed by the Luverne Area Chamber staff and is located in the Rock County Veterans Memorial Building on the Rock County Courthouse Square.

Brandenburg became noted for his photography of wolves and the beauty of the North Woods. Many of his photos feature his native prairie of southwest Minnesota.

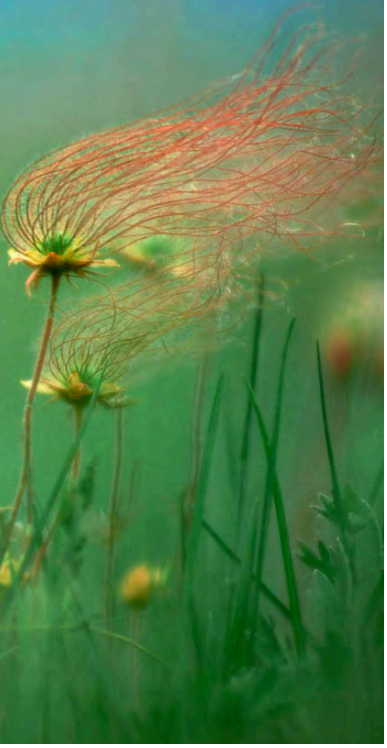
Brandenburg started his career as a contract photographer with National Geographic and spent almost 30 years in that capacity.

His film, "Images from Home: Jim Brandenburg's Minnesota" debuted at the Bell Museum in St. Paul in 2018. The film is a collection spanning more than 50 years of Brandenburg's most rare and exceptional moments filming Minnesota's rich natural history. This documentary was prepared exclusively for the museum and finds its home inside the Glacial Theater nestled within the Pleistocene Minnesota diorama.

From the tall grass prairies to the north woods to the shores of Lake Superior and scenic bluffs of the southeast, the film's immersive experience connects viewers to the cycle of seasons and the surprising and rarely seen interactions of Minnesota's native creatures.

Brandenburg's artistic vision led to the award-winning "Secrets from a Forest," his first full dome (planetarium) movie production for the Bell Museum of Natural History in St. Paul. It premiered in 2023.

Also in 2023, Brandenburg was awarded the National Geographic Lifetime Achievement Award from his fellow National Geographic photographers.





The Luverne gallery opened in 1999, and a few years later Brandenburg also opened a gallery in Ely, Minnesota, where he resided with his wife. The Luverne gallery is owned by the Brandenburg Prairie Foundation whose mission statement is, "to educate, expand and promote native prairie in southwest Minnesota."

The "Touch the Sky Prairie" (pages 20 - 21) is a project located northwest of Luverne that is also part of the Brandenburg Prairie Foundation, and the gallery is not only a display of his prairie images, but also an educational component of the prairie project.

The artist said he was enthusiastic about the project because Luverne is his hometown, the gallery supports prairie preservation efforts. "The gallery, to me, is about giving back to the prairie that's been good to me," he said.

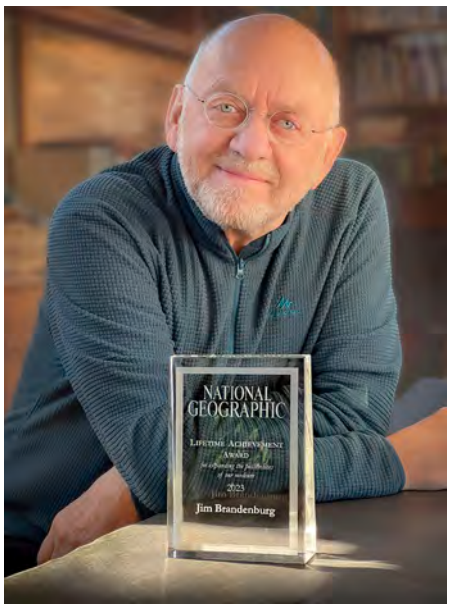
"All my ancestors farmed in Rock County; my great-great-grandparents broke sod here. Growing up here, I was very interested in the prairie... It's a very spiritual thing for me. I have deep, deep roots in the prairie of the Blue Mounds State Park."

The gallery continues to be the cornerstone of a series of local initiatives to cultivate a "Spirit of the Prairie" theme, and the images in the gallery capture and interpret the beauty of the prairie for visitors.

"The landscape is very elusive, if not beguiling, and I think people don't truly appreciate what they're seeing when they're on the prairie of the Blue Mounds," Brandenburg said. "Photography can be helpful to visually interpret that remarkable beauty,"

Visitors are encouraged to stop by the gallery in the Courthouse Square to see more than 100 images of the prairie and beyond. Luverne is very proud of its native son, and we look forward to sharing our pride with others.

The gallery is located at 213 E. Luverne St. and is open Monday - Friday from 8 am - 5 pm and Saturday from 10 am - 5 pm. Call 507-283-1884 for more information.



In 2023, Brandenburg was awarded the National Geographic Lifetime Achievement Award.



HISTORIC PALACE THEATRE





The Palace Theatre opened its doors in 1915, built by Herman Jochims as a grand stage for silent films and vaudeville acts. For more than a century, it has stood as a cultural landmark — surviving wars, depressions, and decades of change — and yet it remains one of the most beautiful and historically significant theaters in our region.

Inside, you can still see touches of its original elegance — from the ornate wall panels to the rare Geneva pipe organ that still plays today. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Palace is a living piece of history — not just preserved, but alive with creativity and community spirit.

But what truly makes the Palace remarkable is how it continues to bring people together. It's where kids see their first movie, where families enjoy a night out, and where live performances, concerts, and school productions remind us how powerful local arts can be.

The Palace has also hosted moments of deep national significance. In 2007, it was chosen by filmmaker Ken Burns as one of the premier locations for his PBS documentary "The War" (see page 27). That event honored local World War II heroes — including Quentin Aanenson, a Luverne native and fighter pilot whose story became one of the most memorable parts of the film. On that night, the Palace wasn't just a theater — it was a gathering place where history, heroism, and hometown pride came together under one roof.

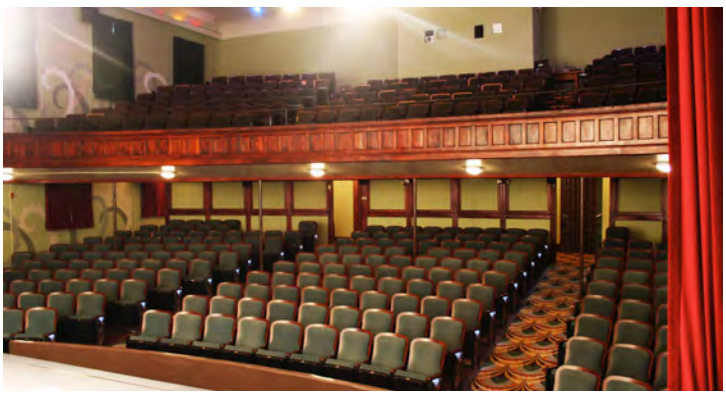
Today, the Palace remains a vibrant center for arts and community life, operated by the Blue Mound Area Theatre Board and supported by volunteers, donors, and local champions who believe in its mission — to enrich, educate, and entertain. It's an anchor for our downtown and an inspiration for all who walk through its doors.

The Palace shows movies on most weekends when live events aren't scheduled. The Green Earth Players' productions and other special events are scheduled throughout the year. The Palace box office is open from noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and can be reached at 507-283-4339. Tickets for live shows can be purchased at the box office or online at www.palacetheatre.us with no added fees.

A free, family-friendly movie is shown on the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. The evening features a cash drawing, just as it was done in the 1930s, when the free movie night was known as "Bank Nite," sponsored by the local banks. The current version of Bank Nite is sponsored by Papik Motors and First Farmers & Merchants Bank. There is also an Afternoon Escape movie, shown one Thursday afternoon of each month. Stop by for a visit or check out an event soon!

To help support the continued efforts of the Palace Theatre, donations are always accepted at the Luverne Area Community Foundation office (P.O. Box 623, Luverne, MN 56156) or online at www.palacetheatre.us.

All of the Palace Theatre's events are listed on palacetheatre.us and are regularly posted on Facebook: Palace Theatre Luverne and on Instagram: @palaceluverne.



GREEN EARTH PLAYERS



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For a schedule of GEP performances, general information, or to purchase tickets, you can call the Palace Theatre Box Office at 507-283-4339. The box office is located next to the Palace Theatre at 104 E. Main Street. Office hours are noon to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.palacetheatre.us.





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The Rock County Community Library is a priceless tool for residents and their families. In addition to serving as a resource center for information, it connects children at an early age with a love of reading and learning. There are eight internet-connected computers available for public use; six in a computer lab for longer use and printing documents and two on the floor to assist patrons in searching online. Pictured below, Mike Prestby and his sidekick "Bongo" the gorilla delight a full house of children and grown-ups to kick off the library's summer reading program.



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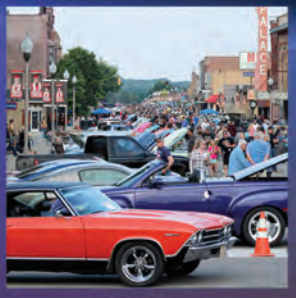
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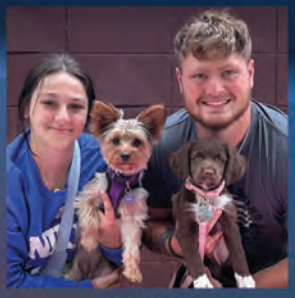
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JUNE 4
Buffalo Days Cruise-In
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JUNE 5 & 6
42nd Annual Buffalo Days Celebration



JUNE 6
3rd Annual Woofstock
Luverne City Park



JUNE 14
Touch a Truck Nite
Luverne Schools



JULY 4
Fourth of July At The Lake



JULY 15
65th Annual Hot Dog Nite



JULY 16 & 17
3rd Annual Nutcracker Fest



JULY 28 - 31
Rock County Free Fair



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SEPTEMBER 25
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OCTOBER 29
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- **U Touch the Sky Prairie**
  171st St.
- **V Child's Remembrance Garden**
- **Pocket Park**

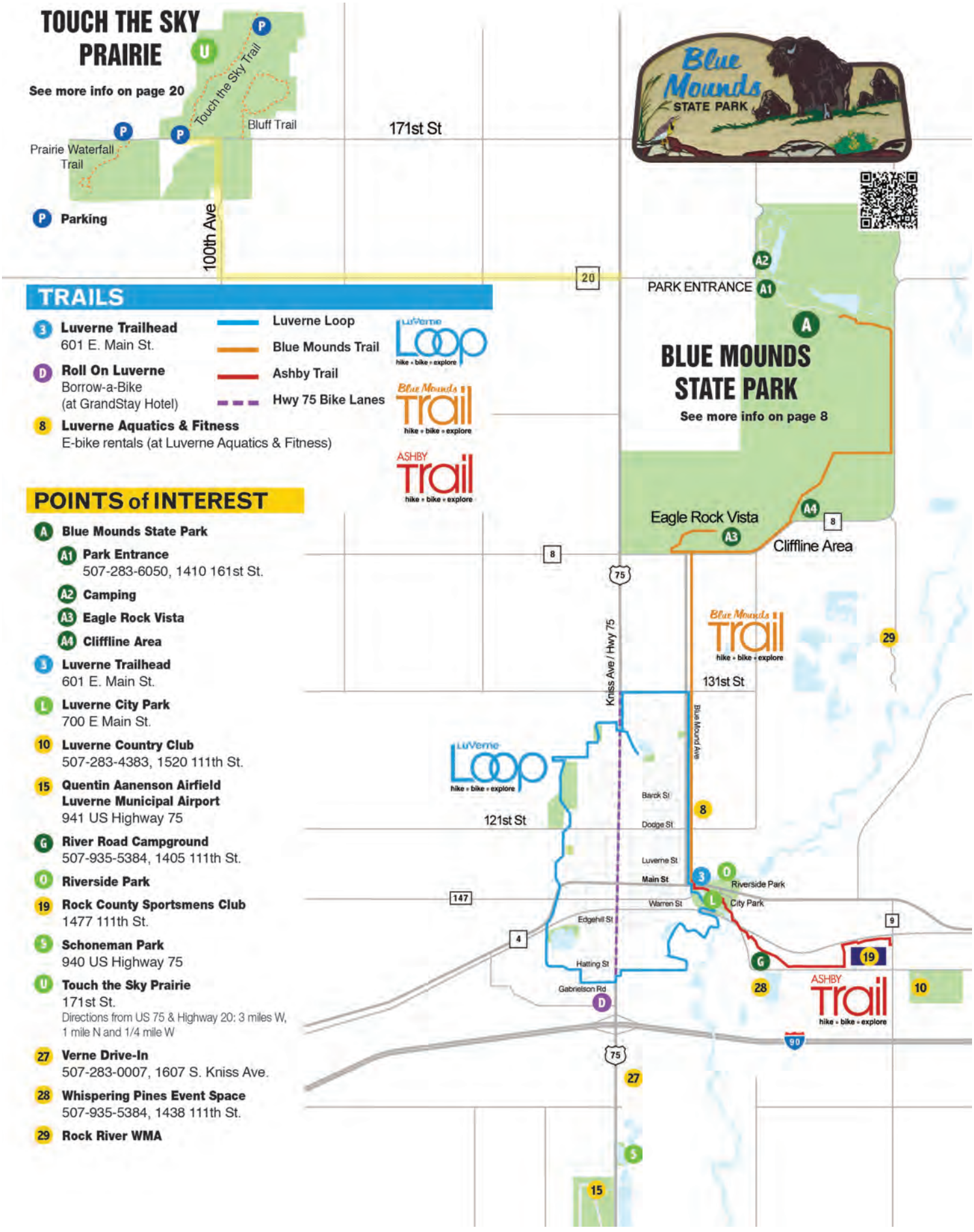
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E Mead Ct
Harrison St
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Dakota Rd
Mag Rd
Russell St
Tallgrass Cir
Meadowlark Cir
Uithoven Ave
Cottage Grove Ave
NE Park St
Estey St
Freeman Ave
Cedar St
McKenzie St
Spring St
Oakley St
Phyleon Dr
Roaring Cloud Cir
Hail Cir
Burns St
Hawes St
Canfield Cir
Davidson St
Donaldson St
Walnut Ave
Sunshine Ave
Pine Dr
Oak Dr
Cherry Dr
Fassett St
SW Park St
SE Park St
Kniss Ave / Hwy 75
Minnesota Ave
Commerce Rd
75
90
Blue Mounds Trail hike • bike • explore
LuVerne Loop hike • bike • explore
ASHBY Trail hike • bike • explore
FOOD/DRINK
luvernechamber.com/food-drink
TRAILS
3 Luverne Trailhead
601 E. Main St
Luverne Loop
7.4 miles
Blue Mounds Trail
6 miles
Ashby Trail
1.95 miles
Hwy 75 Bike Lanes
VISITOR INFO
40 Luverne Area Chamber
Local Information and Maps
507-283-4061, 213 E. Luverne St.
41 Visitor Information Center
507-283-4027, 924 S. Kniss Ave.
(Located at Those Blasted Things)
P Parking
Restrooms
SERVICES
30 Luverne Public Works
507-449-5043, 202 N. Blue Mound Ave.
31 Rock County Law Enforcement Center
507-283-5000, 1000 N. Blue Mound Ave
32 Rock County Highway Department
507-283-5013, 1120 N. Blue Mound Ave.
33 Sanford Luverne Medical Center
507-283-2321, 1600 N. Kniss Ave.
33 Sanford Luverne Clinic
507-283-4476, 1601 Sioux Valley Dr.
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:
Level 2 Charging, Luverne Trailhead
Level 1 Charging, GrandStay Hotel & Suites
DC Fast Charging, Papik Motors
507-283-0007, 1607 S. Kniss Ave.
28 Whispering Pines Event Space
507-935-5384, 1438 111th St.



TRAILS

- **Luverne Trailhead** 601 E. Main St.
- **Roll On Luverne** Borrow-a-Bike (at GrandStay Hotel)
- **Luverne Aquatics & Fitness** E-bike rentals (at Luverne Aquatics & Fitness)

Luverne Loop
Blue Mounds Trail
Ashby Trail
Hwy 75 Bike Lanes

POINTS of INTEREST

- **Blue Mounds State Park**
  - **Park Entrance** 507-283-6050, 1410 161st St.
  - **Camping**
  - **Eagle Rock Vista**
  - **Cliffline Area**
- **Luverne Trailhead** 601 E. Main St.
- **Luverne City Park** 700 E Main St.
- **Luverne Country Club** 507-283-4383, 1520 111th St.
- **Quentin Aanenson Airfield Luverne Municipal Airport** 941 US Highway 75
- **River Road Campground** 507-935-5384, 1405 111th St.
- **Riverside Park**
- **Rock County Sportsmens Club** 1477 111th St.
- **Schoneman Park** 940 US Highway 75
- **Touch the Sky Prairie** 171st St. Directions from US 75 & Highway 20: 3 miles W, 1 mile N and 1/4 mile W
- **Verne Drive-In** 507-283-0007, 1607 S. Kniss Ave.
- **Whispering Pines Event Space** 507-935-5384, 1438 111th St.
- **Rock River WMA**

LUVERNE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Luverne Community Education enriches the lives of individuals and families by providing lifelong learning opportunities for people of all ages and interests. From early childhood education and preschool to youth recreation, adult education, and enrichment classes, our programs offer opportunities to learn new skills, explore interests, build relationships, and stay connected to the community.

Through partnerships with local educators, instructors, organizations, and community members, we bring meaningful learning experiences beyond the traditional classroom. Our programs support children's growth, provide families with opportunities to learn together, and encourage adults to continue exploring new interests and developing skills.

Early Childhood & Family Education supports young children and their families through early learning experiences, parent education, and family activities. Discovery Time Preschool provides a welcoming environment where children can build confidence, develop social skills, and discover a love of learning.

Youth Programs & Recreation offer children and teens opportunities to stay active, develop new skills, build friendships, and make lasting memories through sports, the arts, driver's education, summer recreation, and seasonal activities.

Adult Learning & Enrichment provides opportunities for adults to pursue educational goals, gain practical skills, and explore new interests through adult basic education, defensive driving courses, and a variety of community classes.

At its heart, Luverne Community Education is about bringing people together and creating opportunities for everyone to learn, participate, and grow. Whether you are new to Luverne or have called it home for years, we invite you to discover our programs and experience the many ways Community Education helps make Luverne a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Visit our website at https://www.isd2184.net/ and click on Community Education or call 507-283-4724 to review current programs, class offerings, and registration information.





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- Alternative Learning Program
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- Media Center
- Interactive Flat Panels
- Child Guide
- RTI-Response to Intervention
- Comprehensive Special Education Program
- Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

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- Early Childhood Education
- School Readinesss
- Discovery Time Preschool
- Summer Recreation
- Driver Education
- Adult and Youth Programs
- Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom

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Volleyball · Cheer · Basketball · Gymnastics · Hockey
Wrestling · Baseball · Track and Field · Softball · Golf
Drama · FCCLA · Band · Choir · FFA
Math League · BPA · Intramural Sports · Peer Helpers
Student Council · Mock Trial · Speech
German Club · Spanish Club

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Gunderson Agricultural Scholarships $2,200
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Luverne Public Schools

507-283-8088
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Luverne, MN 56156

www.isd2184.net









In the fall of 2023, the Luverne School District proudly dedicated its Alumni Garden, which features a polished granite wall displaying the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame inductees. The garden was a gift from Warren Herreid II and his wife, Jeannine Rivet, through the nonprofit Luverne Education Legacy Fund.

LUVERNE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lifelong learning is at the forefront within the Luverne community as excellence is strived for each day in the areas of academics, the arts, and athletics at Luverne Public Schools.

Learn. Live. Lead.

The vision statement is evident when you browse our campus and our website. Our facilities have been updated and we are proud of all the upgrades that have been made during our most recent building and remodel project. Additional space was part of the project and a performing arts center. This helped our community with our shared vision to bring 21st century learning to the forefront in our building and facilities.

Luverne has historically done extremely well on statewide assessments and standardized tests. Among peers in our area and within the Big South Conference, Luverne is at the top or near the top in virtually all areas of rigor. Graduation rates hover around 95 percent and Luverne students typically continue their education beyond high school.

Luverne partners with Minnesota West Community and Technical College and Southwest Minnesota State University to offer concurrent enrollment options. We have several career and technical options for students. Luverne also has pathways through our academies model to explore career options and pathways to possibilities beyond high school.

The Community Education program provides enrichment courses from birth to death. A strong pre-school program prepares our youngest learners to be successful in the classroom prior to transitioning into the regular education programs.

Luverne also boasts great success in extra-curricular activities in both athletics and fine arts. Many teams and individuals have participated in state tournaments recently. Our faculty and staff along with our coaches and advisors provide tremendous guidance to our students during this learning extension beyond the classroom.

Come grow with us and be Cardinal Proud!



KIDS ROCK!
CHILD CARE CENTER

WELCOME CHILDREN!

At the heart of Luverne's growing community is Kids Rock! Child Care Center — a place where children learn, play and thrive every day. The center opened in June 2025 and was created through a powerful community partnership between the City of Luverne, the Kids Rock! nonprofit organization and countless local donors who shared one vision: to make quality child care accessible for working families in Rock County.

The 30,000-square-foot facility is located in a renovated former office building that has been transformed into a bright, modern space designed specifically for early learning.

Kids Rock! serves children from infancy through school age, offering a safe, nurturing environment that promotes growth through hands-on, play-based experiences.

Classrooms are thoughtfully arranged to inspire creativity, curiosity and connection — helping children develop the social and academic skills they need to succeed.

The center also features a large indoor activity area and a fantastic outdoor playground. Children enjoy nature walks, enrichment activities, local field trips and visits to the nearby community splash pad during the summer months — adding variety, exploration and joy to their learning experience.

What truly sets Kids Rock! apart is its community-driven mission. The center was built not only to care for children but also to strengthen families, support local employers and enhance Luverne's overall quality of life.

With a licensed capacity to serve 186 children, Kids Rock! helps address the region's child care shortage — making it easier for parents to work, businesses to grow and new families to call Luverne home.

The center's team of caring, highly trained teachers are dedicated to helping each child reach their full potential. All staff are certified in CPR and First Aid, and the program follows the "1-2-3 Learn Curriculum," a play-based approach that encourages exploration, problem-solving and joyful discovery.

Beyond education, Kids Rock! reflects what makes Luverne special — collaboration, compassion and community spirit. The project was made possible in part through a $2.6 million USDA federal grant, along with the generosity of local individuals, businesses and the Luverne Area Community Foundation, whose combined efforts raised more than $1.3 million to bring the vision to life.

Whether you're a new or longtime resident, Kids Rock! Child Care Center stands as a shining example of how Luverne comes together to create opportunities for families and invest in the next generation.

See kidsrockchildcare.org for more information about child care services and employment opportunities.

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SANFORD HEALTH



GOOD SAMARITAN COMMUNITIES

The Good Samaritan Campus in Luverne continues to grow to meet the needs of area seniors. Today the campus hosts a full continuum of retirement and nursing care options including:

- The Oaks – Senior Living Apartments
- Poplar Creek Estates – Assisted Living Apartments
- Mary Jane Brown Good Samaritan Center – Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Facility

Mary Jane Brown Good Samaritan Center has been in the community for more than half a century. The 51-bed facility features skilled and sub-acute care as well as advanced rehabilitation and therapy. The staff at Mary Jane Brown invites you to experience the loving, home-like atmosphere. The care and services have changed greatly over the years, yet the mission to "Share Christ's Love" continues to be the foundation.

The Oaks, senior living apartments, were established just south of Mary Jane Brown in 1997. The 28 spacious apartment units are perfect for older adults who desire to plan for a secure and self-reliant future. Tenants enjoy carefree living, with all the comfort, security and satisfaction of community living.

Poplar Creek Estates, the newest addition to the Good Samaritan campus, opened its doors July 19, 2004. The beautiful assisted living facility is located just south of Mary Jane Brown and is connected to The Oaks. The 24 apartment units offer seniors a home-like apartment setting with a full range of assisted living services. To learn more about The Oaks or Poplar Creek Estates, please call our housing manager at 507-283-3101.

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MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME

The Minnesota Veterans Home, built in 1993, is located on the north edge of Luverne with a scenic view of the Blue Mounds State Park. The residents enjoy a variety of outdoor activities including an enclosed picnic shelter and fishing dock located on the grounds of the Veterans Home. Local community events and golf cart rides are popular leisure activity choices for the residents.

Nursing staff is on-site 24 hours a day to provide individualized care for residents. Other services provided are bi-weekly physician visits, nutritional meals, social, recreation and chaplain services, physical, occupational and speech therapy, pharmaceutical services, mental/behavioral health services, barber/beauty services, transportation to medical appointments and wireless Internet. A 17-bed special care unit is designed to provide care for the physical, emotional and social needs of residents with dementia.

The residents enjoy interacting with the community, and many volunteer opportunities are available. Please call 507-283-6200 if you are interested in more information about living, working, or volunteering at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Luverne.





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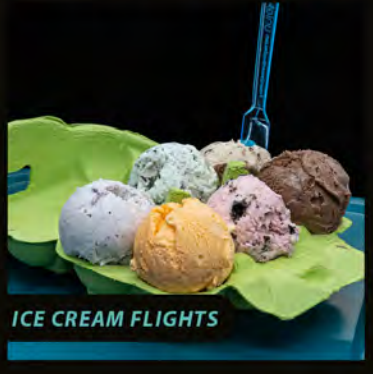
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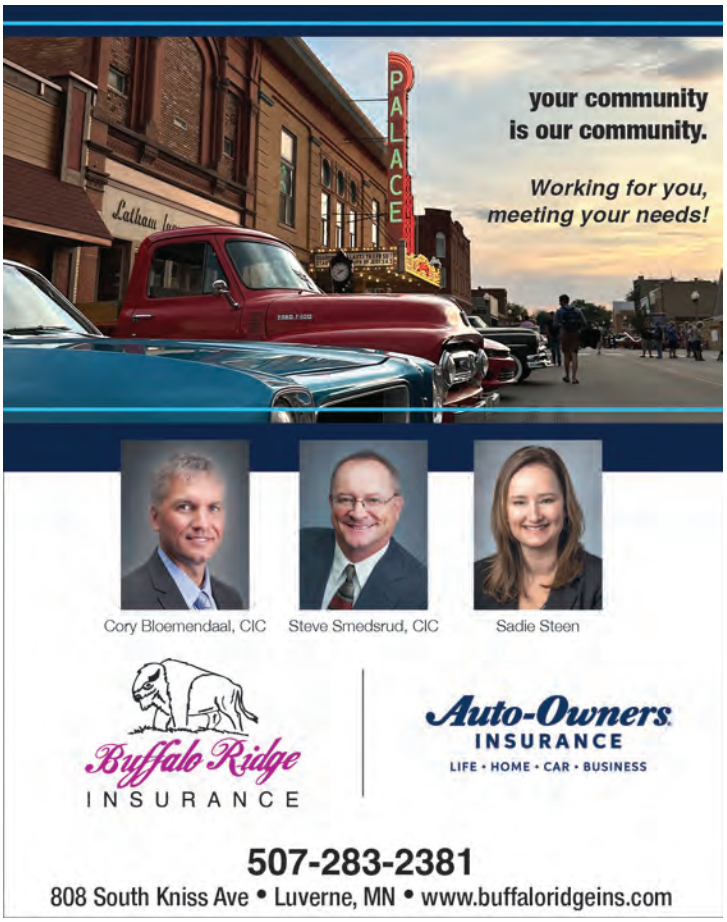
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NUTCRACKER CAPITAL OF THE MIDWEST



The over 7,500-piece nutcracker collection at The History Center is attracting hundreds of visitors who have read about the unique, handmade items and want to see them firsthand.

The nutcrackers are displayed in all shapes, sizes and colors and have origins in fascinating places all over the world.

Donated from Betty Mann's personal collection, they now have a permanent home tastefully displayed in the History Center on East Main Street in Luverne.

Internationally known tourism expert Roger Brooks said he was "blown away" by the display and informed Luverne leaders that nutcrackers could be that niche attraction to make the town a tourism destination.

"This is flat out amazing," he said. "This is worth getting off the interstate for." And visitors are indeed coming off the interstate for Luverne's nutcrackers.

During Luverne's 150th anniversary celebration, the History Center accommodated more than 1,000 visitors, many of whom were drawn to the nutcrackers.

Who knew something so quirky could be so popular?

Local leaders are now taking Brooks' advice and Luverne is on the map and developing a growing presence online as the "Nutcracker Capital of the Midwest."

During the holidays especially, the town goes "nutty for nutcrackers," with businesses, residents and organizations displaying their own personalized, life-sized nutcrackers.

An annual nutcracker scavenger hunt sends participants all over town exploring the nutcrackers and learning their names for a chance at cash prizes.

Christmas 2017 saw the unveiling of nutcrackers in Luverne City Park near the Rock River with lights and music creating a magical nutcracker holiday wonderland.

All this nutcracker nonsense is working.

Word is getting out, and curious visitors are increasingly exploring Luverne to experience the nutcracker phenomena for themselves.

But wait, there's more, be sure to check out the six, eight-foot tall, fine-art nutcrackers that are displayed on Main Street.

Luverne is already known as a gem on the prairie for travelers to stop in and enjoy the beautiful shaded neighborhoods, historic points of interest, clean and inviting parks and trails. The acclaimed Rock County Veterans Memorial, Veterans Memorial Building and Herreid Military Museum are a must see as well.

Our nutcrackers are nutty, no doubt, but we're pleased their fans are discovering our town and all the other wonderful and surprising attractions our little home on the prairie has to offer.

View the nutcracker collection at the History Center, 312 East Main Street, Luverne, MN. Open Monday - Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm. For questions, call 507-282-2122 or email rcmuseum@gmail.com.

WELCOME
VERNE THE PATRIOT



Vance Walgrave poses in front of the massive 14 feet tall boots.



Katie Walgrave gives Verne "a hand."



Verne's pants were installed in December of 2025.

The World's Largest Nutcracker, "Verne the Patriot," was dedicated on July 18, 2026, with a ribbon-cutting and name unveiling at the nutcracker's base on South Highway 75 in Luverne.

After nearly three years of planning, the Uncle Sam-themed nutcracker now towers over the community, measuring more than 73 feet, 7 ½ inches from the bottom of the concrete base to the tip of his red-and-white-striped hat. He is nearly double the height of the previous world record-holding nutcracker in Germany. Verne also has a working jaw that opens roughly 1 ½ feet and can be operated by remote control.

Luverne's nutcracker theme started with Betty Mann's personal collection of 2,500 nutcrackers that were attracting tour buses of curious visitors to her home.

As Rock County's historian, she donated her collection to the downtown Luverne History Center in 2016. Her intent was to direct tourists to the museum where they would enjoy the nutcrackers and also learn about Luverne's rich community history.

It worked. Thousands of visitors from around the globe are drawn each year to the History Center and nutcracker collection that now numbers more than 7,500. (See page 54).

Recognizing the draw of the nutcrackers in Luverne, the Walgrave family was inspired to bring the world's tallest nutcracker to Luverne. They formed the nonprofit, "Just for Nuts Inc.", and raised private funds to build and maintain Verne on a donated permanent easement next to their business, Those Blasted Things, just off Interstate 90.

Verne's official address is 924 S. Kniss Ave. in Luverne.

QUICK FACTS

Verne is 73 feet, 7 ½ inches tall, counting his 8-foot-tall concrete pedestal.

From his boots to the top of his hat, Verne is approximately 13 Betty's tall!

His boots are 14 feet tall! Verne's mouth opens about 1.5 feet wide!

THERE ARE EXACTLY 50 STARS ON VERNE!

Verne is built on a pole that originally supported a Mobil gas station sign.



Katie Walgrave shows off Verne's hair and the top of his hat.



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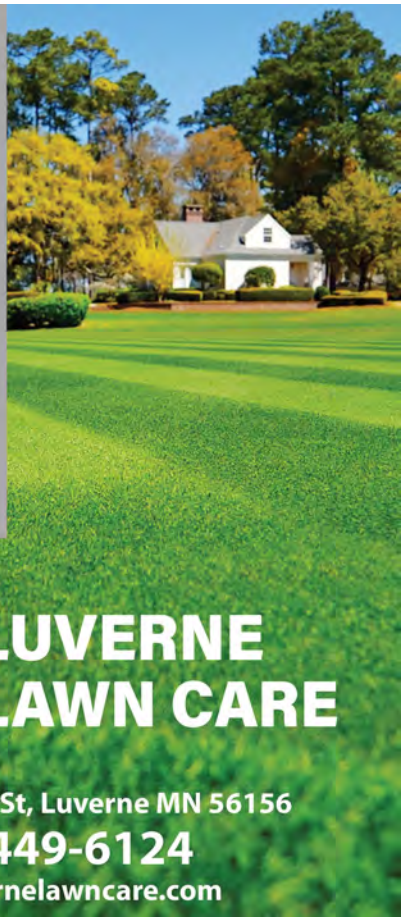
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NUTCRACKER ART
FEATURED ARTISTS

Luverne's first public art project was unveiled in September 2022. Six, 8-foot-tall, hand-painted nutcrackers stand at attention at downtown Main Street intersections — be sure to visit them and read more about each of the artists and their connections to Luverne and Rock County.

VISIT MAIN STREET TO FIND THESE SIX NUTCRACKERS!



"PATRIOT"
BY JENNIFER HUISMAN



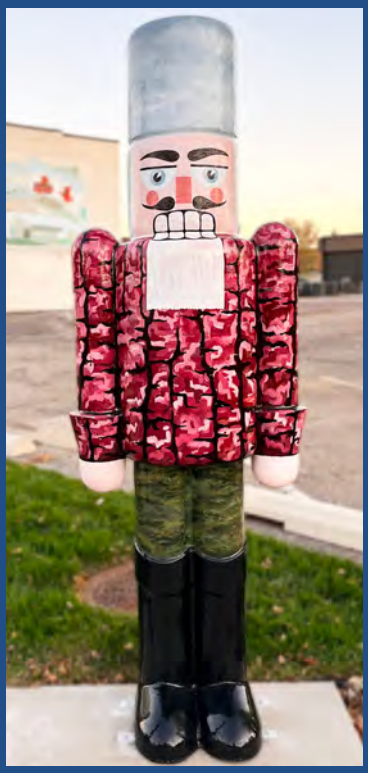
"MAIZE"
BY DAVID KIM SCHMIDT



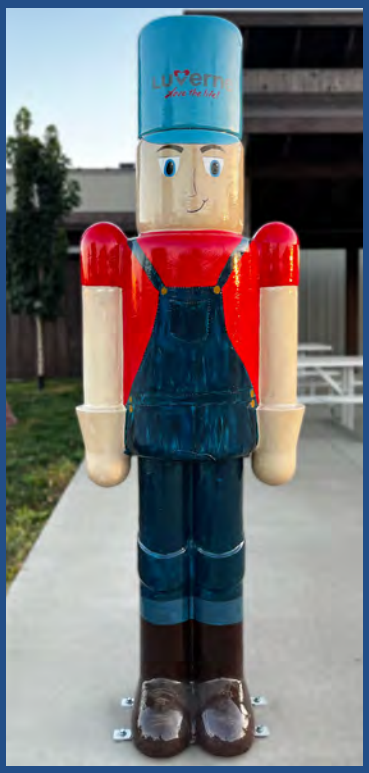
"SOLITUDE"
BY JANINE ANDERSON BRANDS



"MEMORIES"
BY CHRIS NOWATZKI



"BLUE MOUNDS"
BY CORA MILLER



"AMERICAN FARMER"
BY MORGAN AHRENDT



ROCK COUNTY
VETERANS MEMORIAL





THE MEMORIAL IS A FITTING TRIBUTE TO VETERANS AND A BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY ATTRACTION

The Rock County Veterans Memorial was dedicated on the front lawn of the Rock County Courthouse on Memorial Day 2007. More than 2,000 pavers have been spoken for in this spectacular 30-foot-wide memorial.

The Rock County Veterans Memorial is a gift from Warren Herreid II and his wife, Jeannine Rivet, of Minnetrista through their non-profit foundation called KAHR.

Herreid II said, "We wanted to do it to give something back to the community." His father, Warren Herreid I, Luverne, was a decorated veteran and served during World War II and the Korean War. Many of his brothers did as well.

Herreid II said, "It was my father's idea to put the memorial on the courthouse lawn."

It features a life-size bronze statue of a veteran, known as "Poppie." Poppie (pictured at left) sits on one of five granite benches that circle a center obelisk that carries the names of local veterans who died in service.

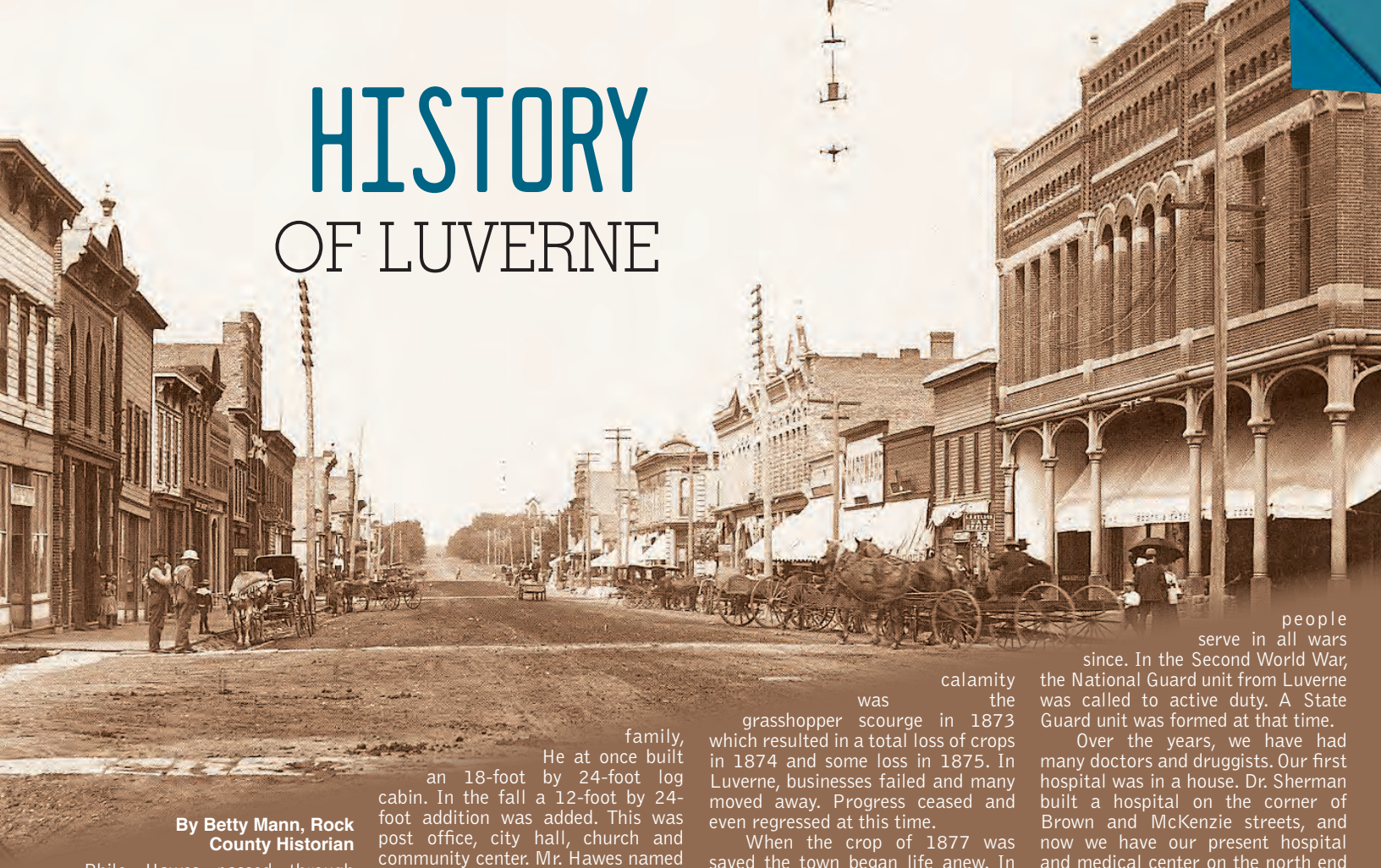
The obelisk is 18 feet tall, made of five-sided black granite.

The five sides face the five benches, which sit at the points of a paved granite star. The pavers are next to the star and also line the sidewalk leading to the memorial.

Luverne's historic Civil War cannon and carriage were added to the memorial. The memorial has proven to be a fitting place of honor for local veterans and a beautiful attraction to the community.

See www.rockcountyveteransmemorial.com.

HISTORY OF LUVERNE



By Betty Mann, Rock County Historian

Philo Hawes passed through this area on June 14, 1867, to set up a mail route from Blue Earth to Yankton, S.D. There was only a rough military road from Jackson through Dakota Territory to Yankton. He and his companion, Joe Fields, camped on the east side of Blue Mounds. He climbed to a high point and when he returned to camp he told his friend, "I have found the Garden of Eden and I will live here and lay my bones here." He did.

He returned in September to establish a mail station and put up hay. He was accompanied by four men and three teams of horses. He first stopped at Blue Mounds but discovered a better supply of timber to the south. There, out of poles and hay, he built a stable large enough for six horses, and he put up enough hay for the winter. He staked a claim by squatter's rights.

He visited his station in November and brought with him the John Leitze family and Miss Miranda Skinner to maintain a "half way" house on the mail route. The house was a dugout, lined with logs and covered with ridge poles. Hay and dirt were piled over the top for a roof. This was near where the power plant is now. Mr. Leitze and his family spent the winters of 1867 and 1868 there.

In March 1868, Mr. Hawes, accompanied by his lovely wife, son Charles and daughter Eva Luverne, arrived at the station and moved into the dugout vacated by the Leitze family. He at once built an 18-foot by 24-foot log cabin. In the fall a 12-foot by 24-foot addition was added. This was post office, city hall, church and community center. Mr. Hawes named the post office Luverne after his daughter Eva Luverne.

The next to arrive as active promoters of Luverne were the Kniss brothers. P.J. Kniss was a proficient surveyor and civil engineer so he plotted out the town west of the Rock River. The first streets plotted north and south were Cedar, McKenzie, Spring, Oakley and Blue Mound. East and west streets were Luverne, Lincoln, Main, Maple and Fletcher.

In January 1871 the governor proclaimed Luverne would be the county seat.

The first school in Luverne was founded in 1871, and the first building was built in 1872. In 1875 a fire destroyed that building and a new one was built on East Main Street. That building soon became too small and school was held in many churches and other buildings. In 1882, Central School was built where the old elementary school now stands. The first class graduated in 1888. In 1895 room was needed again, and a high school was built where Fledgling Field is now. In 1925 old Central School was moved to the side of the block and a new high school was built. That building is now the old elementary school which was turned into apartments. The present high school was built in 1956. An elementary and middle school was added in 1998 to the high school complex.

Early pioneers saw hard times, terrible blizzards, prairie fires and epidemics, but perhaps the greatest calamity was the grasshopper scourge in 1873 which resulted in a total loss of crops in 1874 and some loss in 1875. In Luverne, businesses failed and many moved away. Progress ceased and even regressed at this time.

When the crop of 1877 was saved the town began life anew. In 1878 the boom began. On November 15, 1878, the village government was established.

Construction of the railroads helped this boom. By October 1876, the first trains were running regularly into Luverne, then the terminus of the line. By 1879 a line was laid south to Doon, Iowa. By 1883 trains were running in all four directions. The first depot built of wood needed to be replaced in 1911, and the replacement building still stands in the south part of town.

In October 1880 the first snow began to fall. People were not prepared for such an early snowfall, and throughout the winter many storms left the town with few supplies. There was a three-month period where very little traveling could be done, and Luverne was blocked in by snow.

The pioneer church was the Methodist Church established in covered wagons in 1873 by the Rev. E.H. Bronson. The original part of the present church was begun in 1877. Many other churches began very soon after this. The Episcopal Church was constructed in 1891 and still stands on the corner of Cedar and Luverne streets.

The G.A.R. was a power in the town's early history, and many pictures are of the G.A.R. encampments held here. This has been a very patriotic community over the years. Many of the original settlers were Civil War veterans. We have had people serve in all wars since. In the Second World War, the National Guard unit from Luverne was called to active duty. A State Guard unit was formed at that time.

Over the years, we have had many doctors and druggists. Our first hospital was in a house. Dr. Sherman built a hospital on the corner of Brown and McKenzie streets, and now we have our present hospital and medical center on the north end of town.

In May 1883, gas street lamps were erected. A man was hired to light the lamps every night and put them out in the morning. These lamps cost the village $101. In August 1892, electric lights were installed using the water power at the pumping station. In 1911, the city light plant was remodeled. In 1914 the city was without electricity or water due to flooding of the power plant. A new plant was built in 1915 when residents had electricity for 24 hours a day. We now buy electricity from Western Area Power Administration and Missouri Basin Municipal Power Agency.

In 1873 store owners put up board walks in front of businesses. In 1886 storm gutters were installed. In 1900 concrete sidewalks were poured. In 1907 the streets were graveled. Oct. 1, 1920, four blocks of Main Street were paved with cement.

Through the decades, Luverne flourished and thrived, and the character of the town was shaped by trials and tribulations of the Great Depression, service in war, farming crises and advances and more.

To find out how Luverne became the beautiful, progressive community that it is today, visit the History Center on East Main Street. (see page 62).

We have a great deal to be proud of in Luverne, and it's worth learning about our past to appreciate it.





World War II fighter pilot Quentin C. Aanenson—born and raised in Luverne, Minnesota—flew the P-47 Thunderbolt with the 391st Fighter Squadron in Europe. On display in the museum are the uniform, flight jacket, helmet, goggles, and boots worn by Aanenson. Aanenson's auto-biographical account of his service during WWII was told in his film, "A Fighter Pilot's Story". Ken Burns discovered the film when researching WWII for his epic documentary – "THE WAR" – and selected Luverne as one of the four communities that were featured because of Aanenson's well-told and documented film. (See more about "The War" on page 27.)

HERREID MILITARY MUSEUM

VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING

A massive renovation and revitalization project in 2009 turned the century-old Rock County Jail and Sheriff's Residence into a new place of art, heritage and history, through the generosity of the K.A.H.R. Foundation and the Rock County community.

Called the Rock County Veterans Memorial Building, it features the Brandenburg Gallery, Herreid Military Museum and Kahler Terrace. Perhaps the project's most important purpose is to tell Rock County's history and pay tribute to those who made us the great community that we are.

The features artifacts, pictures, stories and memorabilia of the brave men and women who have served our country. Students became soldiers, farmers became sailors and bookkeepers became airmen... no matter what their call – the citizens of Rock County responded to the call of the nation.

Come and experience their story of service from the Civil War to Vietnam, from WWI to WWII, from the Korean War to more recent military conflicts. Learn of their sacrifice at the Herreid Military Museum.

The third floor of the museum tells the story of the Korean War, Vietnam War and post-WWII wars... of Rock County families, friends and neighbors who were affected by recent war in American history.

The exhibit features a life-size restored military jeep and a bunker similar to what combat soldiers would have used in the jungles of Vietnam.

Hours at the Rock County Veterans Memorial Building are Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sat: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Location: 213 East Luverne Street (two blocks north of Main Street and three blocks east of Highway 75)

Telephone: 888-283-4061

Tourism Information: www.luvernechamber.com







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HISTORY CENTER

Dedicated to archiving and preserving our county's history, the Rock County Historical Society is a thriving organization of dedicated volunteers. From their headquarters at 312 E. Main Street, the Society maintains and preserves artifacts, materials and exhibits from Rock County's 150-year history.

The History Center, located in the historic former Ford dealership building downtown, features displays of Rock County cities, Rock County government, and changing displays on specific historical topics. The Society has developed a massive collection of organized articles, obituaries, and printed materials for public and private research. The History Center is also home to Luverne's famed 4,900-piece nutcracker collection, which draws visitors from around the country.

Check us out on Facebook.com/RockCountyHistoryCenter, Trip Advisor, Google My Businesss or call 507-283-2122 RCHS or 507-283-4061 Luverne Area Chamber.

Multiple locations of local historic interest

The Rock County Historical Society, in addition to the beautiful Victorian home, The Hinkly House, also maintains four buildings at the Rock County Fairgrounds.

The Fitzer Barn was built over 100 years ago and features artifacts and displays of farming materials from Rock County. Working exhibits provide a hint of farm work throughout the 20th century.

The One Room School is a replica of County School District 1 and provides a glimpse of education during the first half of the 20th century at a time when Rock County had over 75 school districts.

The Lopau Summer Kitchen brings the past alive. In the days before air-conditioning ... before electric and gas stoves ... women spent hours cooking and cleaning in the summer kitchens to keep their homes cool during hot summer days. See what life was like!

The Ordung Building offers a glimpse of the past through a wonderful collection of historic farm machinery, manufacturing equipment, and historic vehicles.

Call 507-283-2122 or email rcmuseum@hotmail.com. The History Center address is 312 E. Main St., Luverne, MN 56156.





HINKLY HOUSE



Photo courtesy of The Globe, Worthington, MN

On North Freeman Avenue, the Hinkly House is a beautifully preserved and accurately restored Victorian period home in Luverne presented to the Rock County Historical Society in April 1959 by the heirs of the R. B. Hinkly family.

Luverne businessman and pioneer, R. B. Hinkly, his wife and four children moved into the house on November 11, 1892. Architect W. E. Green designed this modified Queen Anne home that had 12 rooms, 2 bathrooms, and a story-high attic. The home was built of Sioux quartzite that was quarried and hauled on horse-drawn boats from Hinkly's Blue Mound Quarry north of Luverne. Master stone mason was Knute Steine, native of Valdres, Norway, who supervised the masonry. Steine also carved the two lions that stand guard at the home's front door.

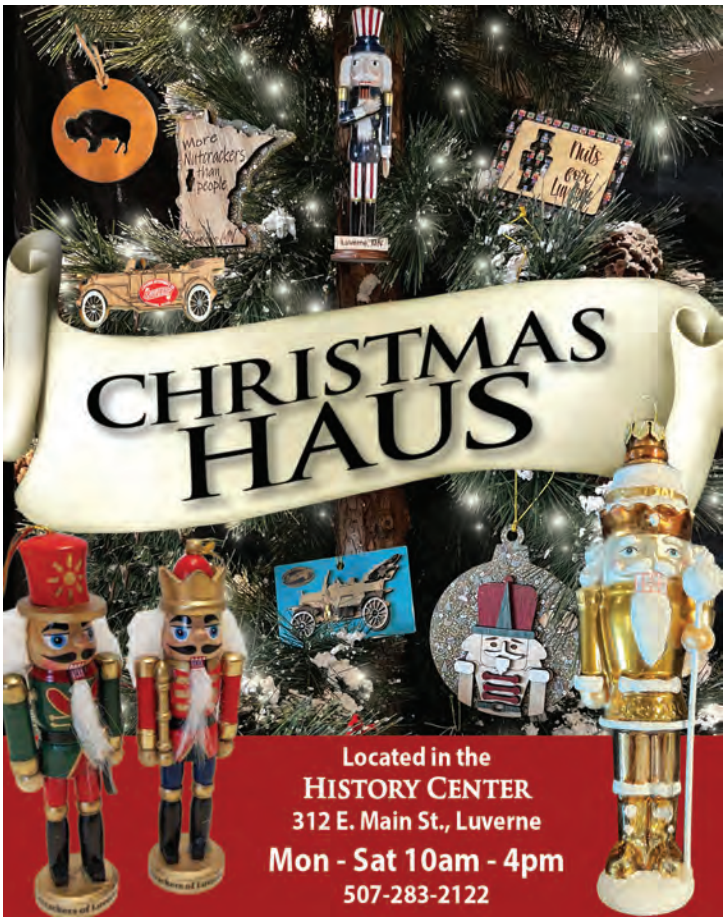
R. B. Hinkly was a visionary of things to come. The house is a tribute to his foresight, engineering and artistic skills. He looked ahead to a time that electricity would be available in Luverne and installed wiring in his house during construction. Hinkly also installed a gravity-operated plumbing system that used a large tank in the attic to supply water to the bathrooms and kitchen prior to the development of the city's water utility.

The name "HINKLY" is displayed in a panel of stained glass on the top of the threshold of the front door. Upon opening the door, the word "WELCOME" and a key are inlaid in the parquet floor. Wood flooring throughout the first floor features unique inlay pattern designed by R. B. Hinkly.

The main floor rooms include a dining room, formal parlor, family parlor, music room, kitchen, bathroom and library/office. Stained glass and leaded windows prominently adorn many of the first floor rooms. The second floor features the master bedroom, five additional bedrooms, a spacious hallway and bathroom.

The full basement features, among other rooms, the wood-working shop where the majority of the home's ornate woodwork was carved and manufactured. One of the home's most unique features is the tunnel constructed from the basement to a "cellar" located in the middle of the backyard. Hinkly used "the cellar" to store dynamite during the time he operated the quarry.

Located at 217 N. Freeman Ave., Luverne. Tours are available by appointment and summer hours are posted at RockCountyHistorical.com. Call 507-283-4061.



ROCK COUNTY AGRICULTURE

Rock County is and always has been an agricultural community.

When settlers arrived in the mid-1860s, prairie grass stretched across land long inhabited by Native Americans, with trees lining rivers and streams. The federal Homestead Act offered settlers ownership after five years of living on the land, drawing families seeking fertile soil to grow crops, raise livestock and build a future.

These families valued freedom, establishing a tradition of sacrifice and service that continues today.

From 1870 to 1873, Rock County's population grew from 138 to 2,119. Settlers built simple dwellings and began tilling, planting and harvesting by hand or with oxen.

Travel was difficult. A 10-mile round trip with horses could take a full day, so churches and communities developed within manageable distances. Local businesses, with Luverne at the center, supplied farm families with essential goods and services.

Eventually as railroads arrived, wood and iron machinery helped farmers work more efficiently. Progress, however, came with hardship. Blizzards, drought, prairie fires, epidemics, hail and wind tested settlers' determination. Beginning in 1873, grasshopper infestations devastated crops for nearly four years. With little money circulating, businesses failed and families moved away. Those who remained persevered with grit.

In the early 1900s, tractors began replacing animal power, transforming agriculture. After World War I, home and wind generators supplied limited electricity. Rural electrification in the 1930s and '40s brought more dependable power, changing farm life.

Electricity replaced kerosene lanterns and eased chores such as pumping water, milking cows and cleaning barns. New appliances also reduced household labor, giving families more time for other responsibilities. These innovations helped farms become more productive and supported the county's continued growth.

Today, GPS technology, drones, advanced machinery and improved plant hybrids allow farmers to produce food on a scale early settlers could scarcely imagine. A single farmer's harvest can help feed thousands of people.

Agriculture now reaches far beyond the family farm. Global markets, renewable fuels and international politics influence daily decisions. Through generations of change, farming remains central to Rock County's economy, identity and way of life, carrying forward the resourcefulness and determination of its earliest farm families.

ROCK COUNTY 4-H

Rock County 4-H first organized in 1926 and continues to thrive. The program offers many community involvement opportunities. Youth explore areas of interest while adult volunteers support their learning and leadership. From various crafts, workshops, day camps and more, 4-H has the right learning experience for all youth.

Rock County has six active 4-H clubs with over 150 youth enrolled.

Contact the Rock County Extension Office for more information, 507-283-1302.



It's farm tires and smokestacks as far as the eye can see when nearly 80 tractors leave Luverne City Park and tool around Rock County for the annual Tractor Ride. The 2027 event is set for September 3. Call 507-283-4061 to participate.

ROCK COUNTY FAIR





Summer traditions come to life at the Rock County Fair in Luverne, where agriculture, entertainment and community pride share the spotlight. Held at the fairgrounds on South Freeman Avenue, this annual gathering invites visitors to explore exhibits, enjoy fair food and spend time with family and friends. FREE gate admission makes it easy to stop by for an afternoon or return throughout the fair for more fun.

Agriculture is at the heart of the celebration. The fair connects visitors with the farming community while giving young people an opportunity to share their accomplishments. Rock County 4-H plays an important role, bringing youth projects and learning experiences into the public eye. For exhibitors, fair week represents months of preparation, practice and responsibility. For visitors, it offers a chance to appreciate the effort behind each project and learn more about agriculture.

A walk through the agricultural, open class and 4-H exhibits showcases local talent, interests and achievements. These displays encourage fairgoers to slow down, take a closer look and celebrate the skills of their neighbors. Whether supporting a young exhibitor or browsing the entries, visitors can discover something interesting while connecting with the people who call Rock County home.

Entertainment brings energy to the grounds, with midway attractions and grandstand shows among the fair's established favorites. The lineup combines familiar activities with new offerings, providing something for different ages and interests. Families can plan around children's activities, while friends can gather for an evening show. Changing attractions give returning visitors fresh reasons to attend each summer.

Food is another highlight. Local agricultural producers help give the fair its flavor, with pork and dairy producers contributing to favorite food traditions. Whether stopping for a meal or enjoying ice cream between activities, fairgoers can take a break and catch up with neighbors.



Commercial exhibits introduce visitors to area businesses and organizations, rounding out the fair experience. Behind the scenes, the Rock County Ag Society and fair board work throughout the year to bring the celebration together. Their efforts help sustain a gathering that welcomes longtime residents and newcomers alike.

Whether you come for the exhibits, entertainment or food, the Rock County Fair offers an opportunity to enjoy summer and make memories. Leave time to explore, visit with friends and experience the community spirit that makes this local tradition special. The 2027 Rock County Fair will be held July 28 - 31. For schedules and exhibitor information, visit rockcountyfair.org.



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9:00 a.m. Sunday
Christian Education Hour
10:15 a.m. Sunday
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INFORMATION

Luverne Area Chamber/CVB 507-283-4061

EDUCATION

Luverne Public Schools
- **District Office** ..... 507-283-4491 ext. 6
- **High School** ..... 507-283-4491 ext. 5
- **Elementary** ..... 507-283-4491 ext. 4
- **Community Education** 507-283-4724
- **Discovery Time Preschool** 507-283-4724

Little Lambs Preschool 507-283-2316
Minnesota West – Luverne Campus 507-449-2772

LOCAL NEWS

Newspapers
- **Rock County Star Herald** 507-283-2333
- **Luverne Announcer (shopper)** 507-283-2333

Radio
- **KCLP 101.1 FM AND KDWC 800 AM / 99.3 FM** 507-935-4529

Video
- **Star Media** 507-283-2333

LOCKSMITH

Harsma Locksmith 605-553-8465

TRANSPORTATION

Luverne Municipal Airport 507-449-5042
Community Transit for Rock County 507-283-5058

LIQUOR STORE

Blue Mound Liquor 507-449-5052

RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT

Luverne Aquatics & Fitness 507-449-5036
Blue Mound Ice Arena 507-449-9138
Luverne Country Club 507-283-4383
Historic Palace Theatre Box Office 507-283-4339
Blue Mounds State Park 507-283-6050
Rock County Sportsman's Club 507-360-5418

LUVERNE CITY OFFICES

City Hall 507-449-2388
Building Inspector 507-449-5031
Public Utilities 507-449-9916
Public Works 507-449-9914
Economic Development 507-449-5033
Administrator 507-449-5025

MAIL

USPS (Luverne Office) 507-283-2186

ROCK COUNTY OFFICES

County Administrator 507-283-5065
Land Records Office 507-283-5022
Land Management Office 507-283-8862
Natural Resources Conservation 507-283-9146
Auditor/Treasurer 507-283-5060
Highway Department 507-283-5010
Clerk of Court/Judicial 507-935-7006
County Attorney 507-283-9111
Motor Vehicles/License Center 507-283-5024
Family Service & Public Health Agency 507-283-5070
Extension & 4-H 507-283-1302
Veterans Service Office 507-283-5061

GARBAGE & RECYCLING

Landfill/Transfer Station 507-283-5005
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We have made every effort to contact all area businesses who may have wanted to be in this edition. It is possible that we have missed a few who wanted to be included.

If we missed you, we are sorry. Please give us a call so you can be added to our list for next year's visitor guide.

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Luverne, Minnesota 56156
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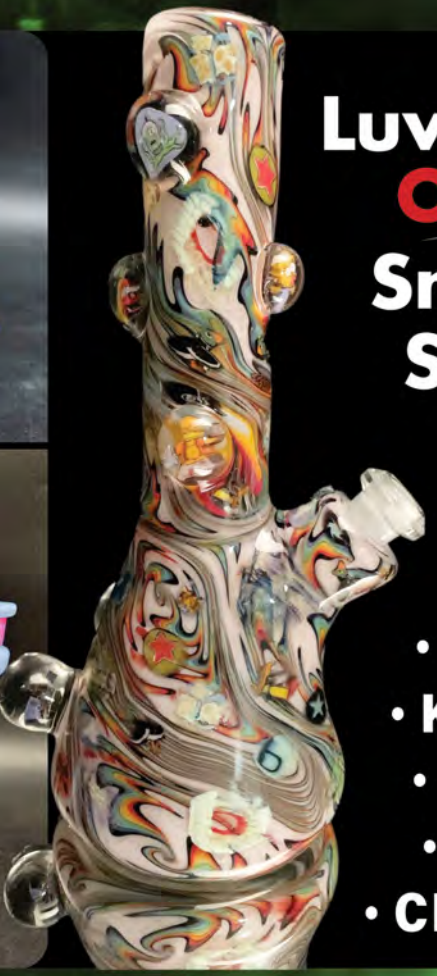
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