



LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IT SEEMS, JOB FAIRS GO ONLINE
2A



FALL SPORTS PREVIEW, PART I
1B, 6B

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Emails show Hagedorn involvement in mail to district

By **STEVE KARNOWSKI**
 Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The head of the Democratic Party in Minnesota denounced Republican U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn on Wednesday for heavy spending on taxpayer-financed mailings to his constituents and called for the House Ethics Committee to investigate.



Hagedorn

Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party State Chairman Ken Martin made the call at a news conference after the Star Tribune reported that emails between Hagedorn and his staff show he was personally involved in decision-making about the mailings. He has blamed staff for exhausting around a fifth of his \$1.4 million official office budget on mailings alone in the first three months of the year. He fired his chief of staff, Peter Su, in mid-June over the issue.

“This meant that Hagedorn spent as much of our taxpayer dollars on mailers as the average congressional office spends on everything else,” Martin told reporters. “It seems clear to us that was using his tax dollars to prop up his failing campaign.”

Hagedorn is seeking a second term in southern Minnesota’s 1st District. He faces a strong challenge in a rematch with Democrat Dan Feehan.

“The DFL is lying about the facts in this story to give life to a non-issue and prop up their ultra-liberal candidate, Dan Feehan, who’s radical left-wing views don’t fit the First District,” Hagedorn said in a statement issued through his campaign committee.

The Minnesota Reformer news site and the Star Tribune have reported that much of the printing work was contracted out to a company owned or partly owned by John Sample, a part-time staffer in Hagedorn’s congressional office, and to Abernathy West LLC, a company incorporated in Delaware with no publicly listed owners. Hagedorn’s congressional office and campaign did not respond to questions Wednesday about who controls that company.

Martin said the contracting was a clear violation of House ethics rules. “Congressmen are not allowed to use tax dollars to line their pockets, or the pockets of their cronies, or the pockets of their staff members. And clearly Jim Hagedorn did that,” Martin said.

Tom Rust, staff director and chief counsel for the House Ethics Committee, which is controlled by Democrats, declined to comment to The Associated Press about the allegations or the possibility of an investigation.

The Star Tribune obtained emails from a former staffer who insisted on anonymity for fear of retribution. They show that the congressman, in both 2019 and early 2020, managed at least some aspects of the constituent mailings and was aware of the volumes.

“We should send an updated mail piece on Cambria,” Hagedorn wrote on Sept. 5 to several senior staffers about a countertop manufacturer based in his district, in just one example cited by the newspaper. “Our successful bipartisan efforts to punish China for illegal dumping of quartz products and stealing intellectual property has helped to defend Le Sueur-based Cambria and 1,000 good-paying jobs in southern Minnesota.”

Hagedorn said in his statement that he will stay within the \$1.4 million he was allotted for the year and that all of the mail his office sent to southern Minnesota was cleared by the Democratic-controlled House Administration Committee. He said the mailings were meant to inform constituents about his town meetings and work on issues important to the district.

The congressman also insisted that the “nuts and bolts” of preparing and sending the mailings was “fully delegated” to his former chief of staff, whom Hagedorn said he fired the day after he became aware of the issue. He said he immediately hired outside counsel to conduct a review and notified the Administration and Ethics Committees. He said the findings of the internal review will be provided to the committees and the public.

Craig Holman, a lobbyist and ethics expert with the watchdog group Public Citizen, said at Martin’s news conference that he believes Hagedorn violated House rules on spending their office budgets. “They cannot be used for personal benefit of the lawmaker, the lawmaker’s family or any staff member of the lawmaker,” he said.

Holman said the consequences Hagedorn might face would depend on how directly he was involved in the decisions. He expects Hagedorn will at least be ordered to reimburse the government for any improper payments and that he could be reprimanded or censured by the full House.

FOOD



While working to solve short-term food insecurity following the abrupt closure of the Faribault Food Shelf, a consortium of 10 organizations is looking for a permanent solution. (Maria Lin Kim on Unsplash)

FOOD FOR ALL

County funds help set up short-term food distribution with permanent solution in the works

By **MISTY SCHWAB**
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The Rice County Board of Commissioners approval of \$125,500 in Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Act funding to the Community Action Center of Northfield is good news for Faribaultians whose cupboards look bare.

‘It’s the most wonderful but crazy process I’ve ever been a part of.’

— *Sandy Malecha, senior director of Healthy Community Initiative*

The funding, which commissioners approved during Tuesday’s meeting, will help cover costs associated with a combination choice food shelf and mobile food distribution program in Faribault.

The sudden closure of the Faribault Food Shelf this spring presented an obstacle for low-income households needing to access food. St. Vincent DePaul’s food shelf has limited hours and cannot expand beyond its location. The Faribault Diversity Coalition currently provides food storage, but that space may soon become unavailable.

“The CAC has stepped forward in an attempt

to fill that gap,” said Social Services Director Mark Shaw, who brought the request to the board. “They’re looking to create an infrastructure not only to meet the immediate needs of Faribault residents, but to be a lasting infrastructure.”

Commissioner Galen Malecha noted that the \$125,500 is only a portion of what is and will be needed. Shaw responded that he anticipates there will be resources available to sustain any organization in the long term.

See **FOOD** on 3A

Council delays decision on controversial shed business

By **ANDREW DEZIEL**
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Faribault’s City Council has opted to revisit a controversial permit it granted in January, after complaints from councilors and neighbors that the spirit of the agreement was not followed.



Ross



Cap

In January, the council overrode the recommendation of its own Planning Commission and approve an Interim Use Permit request from landlord Siegfried Homes. Long owned by Siegfried, the site located at 3701 Hwy. 60 W had been vacant since last summer. Represented by Councilor Royal Ross, a property management agent who abstained from any decision in his role as city councilor, Siegfried asked for the permit on behalf of an as-yet unnamed tenant who wanted to use the vacant property to sell storage sheds.



The Faribault City Council is hoping that the city and owner of an outdoor shed sales business can come to an agreement about making the property, on the city’s west side, look neater. The deadline is Oct. 25. (Faribault Daily News/Andrew Deziel)

A similar store existed in Northfield but has since closed, gap a vacancy in the local market. Without naming the proposed tenant, Ross said that the tenant had a long history in the business, and was looking for a new site after losing their previous site in a different city.

At the time, Ross insisted that the tenant had been in the previous city for a lengthy period of time without controversy. However, tenant Pat Tripp began attracting controversy and complaints almost as soon as he moved in.

Before Tripp entered the scene, the west Faribault site was relatively non-descript, despite its prominent location along one of the main gateways to Faribault.

See **SHED** on 3A



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