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Chanhassen Villager

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OFFICIALS SHORTAGE ADDS PRESSURE TO PREP SPORTS

PHOTO BY TOM SCHARDIN

Some Friday night high school football games across the state have been moved to either Thursday or Saturday due to the lack of officials across the state.

Athletic directors get creative to schedule games

BY TOM SCHARDIN
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A lack of officials has been making the jobs of athletic directors a little tougher this fall. Prior Lake Athletic Director Jeff Marshall is in his first season running the Lakers' programs and he's had to move two football games from Friday to Thursday night, as well as be more creative with scheduling games at the lower levels.

"The officials shortage is definitely a re-

ality," Marshall said. "We've had a number of lower-level soccer games where we have not had referees, so we've either had to have coaches step in as a scrimmage or rescheduled the game.

"Additionally, both soccer and volleyball have moved to different dates on specific weeks to spread games out so officials end up working every night of the week," Marshall added.

Recently, Marshall had to reschedule volleyball to Monday and Wednesday evenings, which is different from the normal Tuesday and Thursday night slots. Varsity soccer for both boys and girls are being forced to do the same for one week.

"Our (ninth-grade and sophomore) football games will typically be played on Wednesdays back-to-back, so the same crew can work both games as there isn't enough football officials to spread these out," Marshall said.

LARGER PROBLEM

Prior Lake is not the only school being forced to get more creative with their schedules. It's happening all over the state.

The lack of officials for Minnesota State High School League sports is not a new problem. It started to arise before COVID-19 and the pandemic heightened it.

Tim Leighton, the communications coordinator for the MSHSL, who is also a former high school official, said there are 6,000 officials registered with the league. Some did opt out due to the pandemic, but many have come back.

The MSHSL's "Thank a Ref" promotion, which has been in place for six years, is a way to recognize officials.

"Being able to say thank you to a referee goes a long way," Leighton said. "It's a great program. We are the first in the country to

Officials to 5 >

Referendum vote just weeks away

District asks for increase in per-pupil funding

BY ERIC KRAUSHAR
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With an Eastern Carver County Schools operating levy referendum on Nov. 2, and early voting well underway, school officials have been making their case to voters.

If approved, the 10-year operating levy would increase general education revenue by \$550 per pupil, subject to an annual increase at the rate of inflation.

Through in-person and virtual presentations Sept. 28-29, school district officials said that building trust through detailed planning for the spending of additional funds is something the communities of Chaska, Chanhassen, Carver and Victoria not only want, but expect.

"We have worked hard to do responsible budget planning with staff and the school board," said Ron Meyer, the district's new director of Finance and Operations and a former ECCS school board member, at the Sept. 29 meeting. "Part of what makes our school strong as well as maintains our strong partnerships with our communities is that the school district takes our responsibility as stewards of public dollars seriously."

AVERAGE HOMEOWNER

If the levy is approved, based on the average Carver County home value of \$375,000, the average homeowner would see a tax increase of about \$20 per month, or \$242 annually. The range of increase would be as small as \$8 per month for a home value of \$150,000, to \$40 per month for a \$750,000 home.

Referendum to 5 >

INDEX

OPINION.....	6
OBITUARIES.....	8
SPORTS.....	10
CLASSIFIEDS.....	13

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