



Russell Newsletter

June 2026

Would you like us to email you your newsletter?
As long as you're not a Russell Boxholder we can email you the Russell Newsletter.

Email your request to:
russellnews@fibmn.com

NOTICE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
TO ENSURE YOUR AD GETS IN THE PAPER PLEASE SEND TO THE ABOVE EMAIL BY THE FRIDAY BEFORE NEWSLETTER WEEK.

Russell Newsletter,
PO Box 360,
Russell, MN 56169.

**Join Grace First
Parish
for church every
Sunday
8:30 fellowship
Church service at
9:00 a.m.**



Russell Bar & Grill
Open Monday thru Saturday
at 11:00 a.m.
If you would like to order
take out, call 507-823-9766

Russell Bar & Grill Under New Ownership.

As many of you already may know, the City Council voted to sell the Russell Bar & Grill to Jordan Handeland of Marshall. Jordan is the owner of the Hitching Post in Marshall and a co-owner of The Rock in Granite Falls with well known success.

A lot of you want to know why the city decided to sell the bar & grill and for the reasoning behind selling it to Jordan. Let's set the record straight so everyone knows the truth. The Russell Bar & Grill being sold to a private individual has been discussed for many years now. For the main reason that it has not made the city any income for years. The RBG has either broke even or has lost money for quite a few years. If a municipal bar loses money for more than 2 years in a row, there needs to be a public hearing for the residents of the city to attend to decide if the bar should continue to operate as a municipal or should be closed down or sold. The Russell Bar & Grill is a staple in our area that a lot of patrons love to come to regularly for food & beverages. When our previous manager resigned, Mayor Hilary started asking successful restaurant owners in the area if they had any good ideas for someone to manage the RBG. No one she talked to had a good idea for a manager and said they are very hard to come by, but one of the owners of a successful restaurant asked if we ever considered selling it to a private owner and told Hilary to give Jordan Handeland a call to see if he would be interested. After discussion with Jordan, the city council & city attorney, it was decided to sell. This decision was not made lightly and all angles were discussed including why we don't advertise the RBG for sale, why we think it is best to sell it to a private owner as well as many other thoughts. Why didn't the city advertise the RBG for sale and try to get the highest dollar? Most of the council was very passionate that if we sell the RBG that we have the confidence in the buyer to run it and run it well and keep it running as the Russell Bar & Grill. That is what they found in Jordan and his ability and professionalism in the restaurant industry. The council didn't want to sell it to just anyone that didn't have a reputable name and success in the Bar & Grill industry.
(Continued on next page)

There were a few times in the past year that the RBG had to be closed because there was not enough staff to cover shifts. With Russell Bar & Grill's current staff along with Jordan's staff at The Hitching Post, there are plenty of staff to keep the RBG open to it's full capacity.

Why did the council feel this was the best option for our city? The city is guaranteed a profit through an individual owner through commercial property taxes, on and off sale liquor licenses, not having to pay for repairs to the building, less employees to pay from city funds, etc.

When city council members and mayors are elected in any city, they are not trained or know how to manage a bar and restaurant. Do they know the bar & grill industry and how to make it successful in any city? This has been tried for years with little success. Selling the Russell Bar & Grill to Jordan who knows the industry like the back of his hand was the best option for everyone including our local residents and patrons. Within the agreement, if Jordan decides to sell the Russell Bar & Grill, the city has first option to buy it back from him.

A comment that has been made a few times..."The RBG is not owned by the city anymore so going there isn't supporting the city any longer." That is not true! Without the continued support of the patrons, the RBG will no longer be, the city will lose its only bar & restaurant, another building sitting empty, no commercial property tax revenue and so much more. So please, continue to support the Russell Bar & Grill! Same great environment, same great staff, great beverages and food!

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to the city clerk or any of your council members or mayor. Thank you!



Role call was announced Memorial Day at the Russell Cemetery. Thank you to all that have served! And Thank You to all who helped make the cemetery look so nice for Memorial Day!



Russell Blood Drive is July 27th at the Russell Community Center from 1 pm to 7 pm. Please donate if you are able! Thank you!



Russell Bandwagon Days had inflatable fun all weekend for the kids!

Thank You

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the *Morning Coffee Group* for their thoughtful donation to help purchase the flowers hanging in the bandwagon. Your generosity adds beauty to our community and is greatly appreciated by all.

PUBLIC NOTICE

FILINGS OPEN FOR RUSSELL CITY COUNCIL

The first day to file for Mayor Two Year Term and Two Open Council Seats with Four Year Terms on the Russell City Council is Tuesday, July 14, 2026, and the last day for filing on Tuesday, July 28, 2026. Closing time for filing on the last day is 5:00 P.M.

Candidates must file in the City Clerk's Office, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 7:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M or Tuesday Noon to 5:00 P.M. at 106 River Street, Russell, MN. There is a \$2.00 filing fee.

Thank you,
Laurie Millner
Clerk Treasurer
City of Russell

Coon Creek Township 2026 Election Dates

Coon Creek Township has been a mail-in ballot township since 2017. The State Primary Election is August 11, 2026. If you are a registered voter, you should receive your ballot in the mail between June 26 – July 14. The State General Election is November 3, 2026. If you are a registered voter, you should receive your ballot in the mail between September 18 – October 6.

If you are a new township resident or have never registered before, you are encouraged to register before Election Day. You can register online at the Office of the MN Secretary of State website or at the Lyon County Gov. Center.

Feel free to contact the Election Department at the Lyon County Gov. Center or Lori Grant, Coon Creek Township Clerk at 507-823-4746.

Thank you!

The Russell Ambulance Crew would like to thank the Grant Families for their generous donation to the Russell Ambulance Department in memory of Joyce Heinis. Your donation is great appreciated!!

YOU WERE MADE BY GOD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

WHAT A MESS!

VBS

Games, crafts, Bible stories, music & lots of FUN!

EASY REGISTRATION!

SCAN ME!



QUESTIONS?
Contact Allie Sanderson at 507-920-0137

COME READY TO LEARN, LAUGH, AND GROW IN FAITH!

GRACE FIRST PARISH RUSSELL

JULY 13TH - 16TH

6:00 - 7:30 PM

ICE CREAM SOCIAL!

Join us for a sweet summer evening of food, fun, and fellowship!

THURSDAY, JULY 16TH AT 6:00 PM

HOT DOGS, CHIPS, PIE AND ICE CREAM!

VBS CHILDREN WILL BE PERFORMING A SHORT PROGRAM WITH SINGING, DANCING, AND SHARING WHAT THEY LEARNED AT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT 6:00 PM

BOUNCY HOUSE AND GAMES for Children!

GRACE FIRST PARISH
100 FRONT STREET
RUSSELL, MN 56169

Everyone is Welcome!



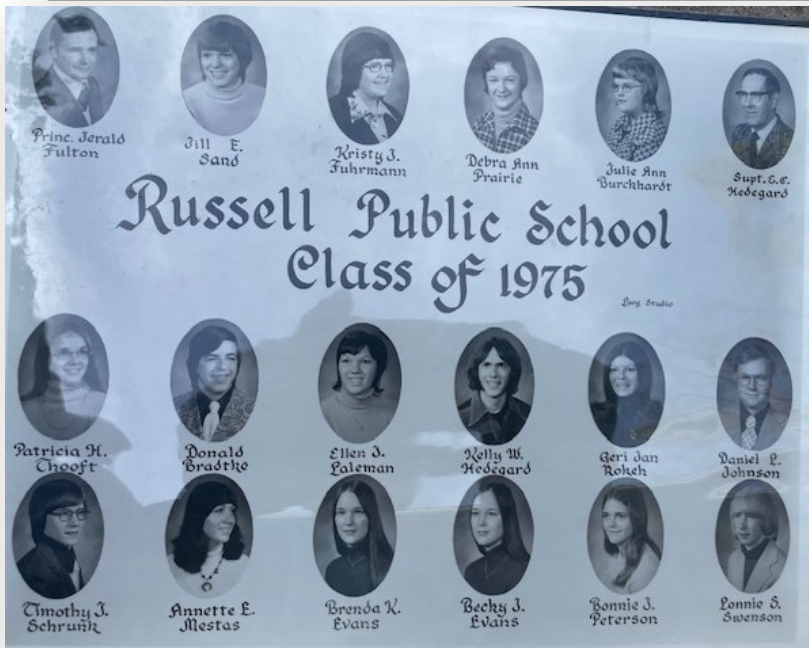
Front row: Dean Lensing, Ellen (Laleman) Habben, Debra Prairie, Dan Johnson
 Back row: JoAnn Lensing, Patti (Thooft) Welvaert, Allen Habben, Jill (Sand) Jaspersen, Annette Mestas, Jeanne and Lonnie Swenson, Gary Jongerius (Debra Prairie's husband)

Class of 1975 Class Reunion was held over Bandwagon Days! The Russell High School Class of 1975, 51st Class Reunion was held at the Kronborg in Tyler on Friday, May 29th. It was 51 years to the day!

Front row: Dean Lensing, Ellen (Laleman) Habben, Debra Prairie, Dan Johnson
 Back row: Patti (Thooft) Welvaert, Jill (Sand) Jaspersen, Annette Mestas, Lonnie Swenson

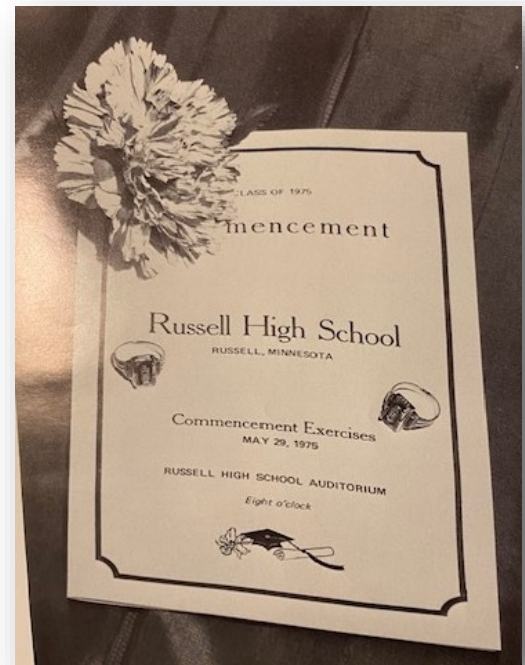
Not attending: Bonnie (Peterson) Christianson, Kelly Hedegard, Geri Jan (Rokeh) Willfong, Becky (Evans) Tykwinski, Brenda (Evans) Meulebroeck

Deceased: Timothy Schrunck, Julie Burckhardt, Kristi (Fuhrmann) Jones, Donald Brantley



Russell Bandwagon Days Grand Marshal for the second year in a row goes to Marlo Williams! Who is always willing to lend a helping hand and keep busy helping the City of Russell anyway he knows how.

Thank you Marlo!





The Russell Ranch Rodeo presented by Birch Coulee Arena was again a great success! Team Hell Bent won the buckles for being the team with the most overall points in each event. What a fun night!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success including the Russell Bandwagon Days committee who sold food, beverage sellers, the VanDamme's for allowing us to use their grounds as well as help get things set up for the rodeo! The crowds of support that come to watch this exciting event are wonderful and hope to continue to have the ranch rodeo in the future!

The First Annual Russell Bandwagon Days Golf Tournament was a great success! WOW! What an amazing and fun first year! 52, 4 person teams! Russell Bandwagon Days paid out 5 flights with First place in each flight winning \$900, second place winning \$700 and third place teams winning \$500! They also gave out a prize for very last place of \$200 and a random draw team that won \$300!

1st Place in the first flight went to Sawyer Hanson's team with a total score of 53! 2nd place in the first flight went to Matt Hook's team with a score of 57 and the third place team in the first flight went to Terry Christianson's team with a 58! Some other fun things during the tournament was to have a RTR Varsity golfer (Teign O'Leary & Jonah Norgaard) tee off for them on hole 18. If the varsity player's tee off was better than their own they could golf on from there! There were also closest to the pin prizes, longest putt and the very exciting \$10,000 hole in one challenge on hole number 12 that was sponsored by Town & County Insurance! Unfortunately no one got a hole in one that day but a few were close! An amazing 33 hole sponsors donated towards the golf tournament! Wow! That is some great support! Thank you to each and every one of you that helped put on the first annual Russell Bandwagon Days tournament! There will be a second annual tournament on Friday, June 4th 2027!



C & K Smokehouse of Russell Donated coozies to keep everyone's beverages cool during the tournament as well as sponsored a hole!



The Russell Fire Department would like to thank everyone who attended the annual pork sandwich feed again this year! They had a great turnout and as always appreciate your support!

Little Scrapper Pedal Pull Winners!

4 year olds 1st place Melah, 2nd Clayton, & 3rd Huxley
 5 year olds 1st place Banks, 2nd Tripp, 3rd Everly
 6 year olds 1st place Ryanne, 2nd Austin, 3rd Hunter
 7 year olds 1st place Crew, 2nd Camden, 3rd Bowen
 8 year olds 1st place Reid, 2nd Stanley, 3rd Kayden
 9 year olds 1st place Eden, 2nd Stetson, 3rd Liam
 10 year olds 1st place Kinley, 2nd Cora, 3rd Ridge
 11 year olds 1st place Makayla, 2nd Samuel, 3rd Sawyer

70 kids participated in the pedal pull this year! They all did a great job! A big thank you to Curt Schultz for helping the kids with the tractors!





Cow Bingo Winners! Colton and Allie Sanderson's highlander cow, Buckwheat graced us with his presence in attending cow bingo this year! The lucky winners on square #14 were Deb Carlson on the \$20 board and Maxine Kerkaert on the \$10 board! Neighboring squares were also paid out this year for a total of \$2200 paid out! Congratulations to all of the winners!



There was a great turnout and great help at Bingo under the tent on Saturday! Russell Bandwagon Days paid out full pots and some were even close to \$100! Sherriff Wallen was great at being the Bingo and raffle ticket caller!



Spectator Support for Ranch Rodeo Friday night and Bull Riding Saturday night was nothing short of wonderful! Even though there was a lot going on over Russell Bandwagon weekend, there was a great crowd both Friday and Saturday night! Hope all enjoyed and thank you for coming! Also a thank you to Grace First Parish for selling food the night of bull riding and the Russell & Balaton First Responders for keeping everyone safe!



Russell Bandwagon Day Kickball tournament! There were 10 teams that participated in the kickball tournament and fun was had by all! The Gooning Goblins team won first place with Kick-Filet coming in second! Thank you to all who participated, cheered the teams on and helped with this event! We hope to do it again next year!



Russell Bandwagon Days Vendor Event had 20 vendors as well as Grace First Parish Ladies serving coffee and lunch on Saturday. Thank you to all who attended and helped with this event. Hope to see you again next year.

Breakfast Under the Tent and Kids Fishing Tournament!



Scrambled eggs, pancakes, sausage, juice & coffee! What more could you ask for after a long weekend! The Bandwagon committee and their spouses are great cooks!



There were 39 kids at the kids fishing tournament on Sunday! Trophies were given to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place as well as bait donated by Dustin Thooft, prizes donated by Matt Kerkaert, lures & neck gators donated by Ski Williams and buckets donated by Runnings.



2026 Russell Bandwagon Days Car Show! Our participants were a bit low this year but the crowd and voters were in full force! We had 14 cars in the car show and over 100 people walk through and vote for their favorite car! 1st place winner, Kelly Carr received a car plaque and a \$100 gift certificate to The Hitching Post. The 2nd place winner, received a car plaque and a \$50 gift certificate to The Hitching Post. The 3rd place winner, Bob Lensing, received a car plaque and a \$25 gift certificate to The Hitching Post.



All of our spectators were beautiful, but have to say the most beautiful that walked through the car show were the princesses from Minneota!



Dave Bukowski, a Russelite to the core brought his mustang to the car show. Check out his license plate! #RSLBDOG



City of Russell Clerk

Office Hours:

Monday 6:30 am-2:00 pm
Tuesday: 11:00 am-5:30 pm
Wednesday: 6:30 am-2:00 pm
Thursday: 6:30 am-2:00 pm
Friday: 6:30 am-2:00 pm

Hours are subject to change due to appointments. If you have any questions, please leave a message at 823-4366.

NOTICE! The next City of Russell regular meeting is **Wednesday, July 15** all meetings are at 5:30 pm in the City Hall meeting room.

Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association of Minnesota along with the City of Russell would like to congratulate Laurie Millner on earning the designation of Minnesota Certified Municipal Clerk! This prestigious certification recognizes Laurie's professional competency in the execution of her duties as City Clerk/Treasurer. An awards presentation recognizing all individuals who have achieved this designation over the last year will take place at the MCFOA Annual Conference in Bloomington, MN, March 9-12, 2027!

Congratulations Laurie!

Minnesota Memories June 2026...months of memories

All months can provoke memories; however, some might think May and June special in this regard. Some of mine include Memorial Day and marching to the cemetery for the memorial ceremonies and scrambling to pick up expended brass from the firing squad volleys (a favorite cousin-in-law favored me with some nice photographs of this year's events...the moisture in my eyes was certainly caused by those five daily eye drops my optometrist has prescribed). Other memories are of cultivating 50 acres of corn with a two row cultivator on an "R" Minneapolis-Moline tractor...the shields had to be set so that none of those valuable little corn plants was buried...no radio, no mobile phone, no umbrella, no air conditioning...just me, the tractor and the great outdoors. Fishing was another recollection, which lakes were yielding good bullhead catches...I remember catching bullheads in Clear (Russell) lake as fast as I could pull'em in and re-bait the hook (a "mess" of bullheads fried in my mother's batter still has 1st place in my taste memory). My memory of Bandwagon Days' evolution (incomplete in details I am sure) begins with the Bandwagon being on Main street on Wednesday evenings during the summer (stores were open on Wednesday night in the summer) and the Town Band playing therein. Later came Lyon County Dairy Days (Russell Creamery was a big deal in those days) where the Lyon County Dairy Queen was crowned every summer. Finally, with the languishing of Dairy Days, some enterprising citizens fell back on the Bandwagon history to bring the present Bandwagon Days festivities into existence. That is my broad-brush memory...full me in on missing details and needed corrections...remember, I admit to sometimes "telling you more than I know." Of course, the arrival of fireflies or as some call them "Lightening Bugs" happens every year about this time...do small children still catch them at night, put them in a jar and put that jar in their bedroom for the night? Will the corn be knee high by the 4th? We hope May and June yield you many memories. Be careful out there, and remember "those who read know things". ©Marland J. Burckhardt

The City of Russell was awarded One MILLION DOLLARS from the State of Minnesota towards their infrastructure project! After a few years of meeting with our honorable state representatives, the City of Russell was awarded one million dollars towards their infrastructure project! Although the city of Russell was requesting more, this is a good start! The fact that we received any funding shows that our project is worthy which could make future asks to be deemed worthy as well!

The Mayor, city clerk and city council members will continue to ask for the remaining 3 Million dollars and may be larger due to inflation and will need to be worked through before next year's session. They will need to make it very clear that we are not changing or adding onto the project but may need to make some changes to the number due to the cost of goods and services.

The city will have a five year period to utilize the million dollars. They will start to get information around August on what will be the next phase to the infrastructure project will be and hope to continue with phases by 2027.



Karen Ann Johnson was born on June 4, 1946, to Alfred and Jeanette (Peterson) Williams in Tyler, Minnesota. She was raised on the family farm west of Russell, Minnesota. While growing up on the farm, she met Darrel Johnson, who would become the love of her life. On February 13, 1965, she married Darrel at the First Presbyterian Church in Russell, beginning a marriage filled with love, laughter, hard work, and unwavering devotion. Following their marriage, they moved wherever Darrel's construction jobs took them. In 1971, they bought a farm 3½ miles east of Russell. They made their home there for 54 years, raising four children, countless crops and livestock. The love Karen and Darrel shared was evident to everyone who knew them. They worked together, traveled together, danced together, and truly enjoyed life side by side. Their devotion remains one of the greatest gifts Karen leaves behind. Karen and Darrel spent 15 years fishing and camping at Little Bend and New Everetts, enjoying many evenings around a campfire with friends. They wintered in Lake Havasu, Arizona for 15 years, where they made new friends and enjoyed a busy social life in the sun. Karen loved to laugh and nothing brought her greater joy than spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, making memories together. Karen passed away surrounded by her loving family on Saturday, May 30, 2026 at her home in Tyler at 79 years, 11 months and 26 days. Karen was a member of Russell Presbyterian Church, where she was baptized and confirmed. She taught Sunday school for many years and served on Session. She especially wanted her children to have a strong foundation in faith. She is lovingly remembered by her husband, Darrel Johnson of Tyler; four children, Todd (Carol) Johnson of Russell, LeAnn Sanderson of Yukon, Oklahoma, Brent (Vonnice) Johnson of Balaton, Minnesota and Lori (Bryan) Martin of Prior Lake, Minnesota; ten grandchildren, Brandon (Laurie) Johnson, Alissa (Kole) Henkel, Spencer (Brooke) Kor, Corbin (David) Babb, Jada and Alayna Sanderson, Mason (Holly) Johnson, Morgan (Kyle) Steineke, Brooke (Brock) Cadwallader and Mitchell (Sanika) Martin; 19 great-grandchildren, Kolt, Elliot, Addy, Asa, Aura, Ava, Kroix, Jayden, Oaklyn, River, Branch, Odin, Delta, Baker, Lola, Bregan, Kaylee and Suede; and baby Johnson due in July, six siblings, Marian Livingston of Russell, Marlo (Cece) Williams of Russell, Arden Williams of Russell, Richard Williams of Russell, Mick (Arlene) Williams of Tyler, and Steve (Elise) Williams of Lynd, Minnesota; and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents; two nieces, Wendy Lustfield and Missy Janssen; two nephews, Chad Livingston and Mark Williams; two sisters-in-law, Melanie Williams and Aloa Williams; a brother-in-law, Wayne Livingston, father- and mother-in-law, Martin and Viola Johnson; brothers-and sisters-in-law; and ten nieces and nephews on the Johnson side.

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PO Box 360
Russell, Minnesota 56169

Return Service Requested

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