

ELECTION GUIDE

2026 PRIMARY



CLEARWATER COUNTY CANDIDATES

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CLEARWATER COUNTY VOTING INFORMATION

How primary elections work



In partisan races or those with political parties, only one candidate in each party moves on. For example, the winner of the Republican primary for governor will be on the ballot in the November general election. The rest of the candidates are out of the running.

You can only vote for one party, but you choose which one, as Minnesota doesn't have party registration.

In nonpartisan races, the primary narrows the pool of candidates down to twice the number of available seats. So if five candidates are running for county sheriff, the top two in the primary will be on the ballot in November. If 14 people are running for four seats on the school board, the top eight will advance.

Where and when do I vote?

There are three ways to vote in Minnesota: by mail, early in-person and in-person on Election Day.



Voting by mail began June 26. Some precincts in rural areas are mail ballot precincts, and ballots are automatically mailed to registered voters there. If you don't live in a mail ballot precinct, you can still request a ballot at mnvotes.gov/absentee. You can return your ballot by mail, and those ballots must be received by no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day. Or, you can drop it off yourself at your county elections office no later than 5 p.m. on Election Day.



Early in-person voting also began June 26. You can go to your county's early voting location(s), usually the courthouse or government center, and fill out an absentee ballot. You will need to know your MN ID or Social Security number to fill out the application.

Starting July 24, voters can cast ballots as part of the "early voting process," which is more similar to voting on Election Day. You'll fill out a short certificate, fill out a ballot and then put it into the ballot counter.

Clearwater County's early voting location is the Clearwater County Courthouse in Bagley (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.)



On **Primary Election Day**, Tuesday, Aug. 11, you can go to your local polling place to vote until 8 p.m. You can find your polling place at mnvotes.gov/pollfinder.

Local election officials also send teams of election judges to nursing homes and hospitals during the 35 days before the election and provide ballots to voters who live in the city or town where the facility is located. You can contact facility management or your local election office to find out when that will happen.

How do I register to vote?



You can register to vote or update your registration online at mnvotes.gov or by returning a paper form to your local elections office until July 21. You'll need an email address and your driver's license or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

You can also register when you vote, either early in-person or on Election Day. You'll need to bring one proof of residence, like your driver's license or a photo ID paired with a bill or lease.

Where can I find more information?

For more details on voting, you can visit mnvotes.gov, call 1-877-600-VOTE (8683), text 651-217-3862 or contact your county election office.

For more on the 2026 election, including candidates, maps and more, visit kaxe.org/election2026.

What is KAXE?



KAXE is a Northern Minnesota public radio station, founded in 1976. We have signals in Grand Rapids (91.7), Bemidji (90.5) and Brainerd (89.9), and our broadcast can always be streamed at kaxe.org.

KAXE News began in 2023, and our team of Northern Minnesota-born-and-raised journalists puts together this Primary Election Guide.

KAXE's Election Guide methodology



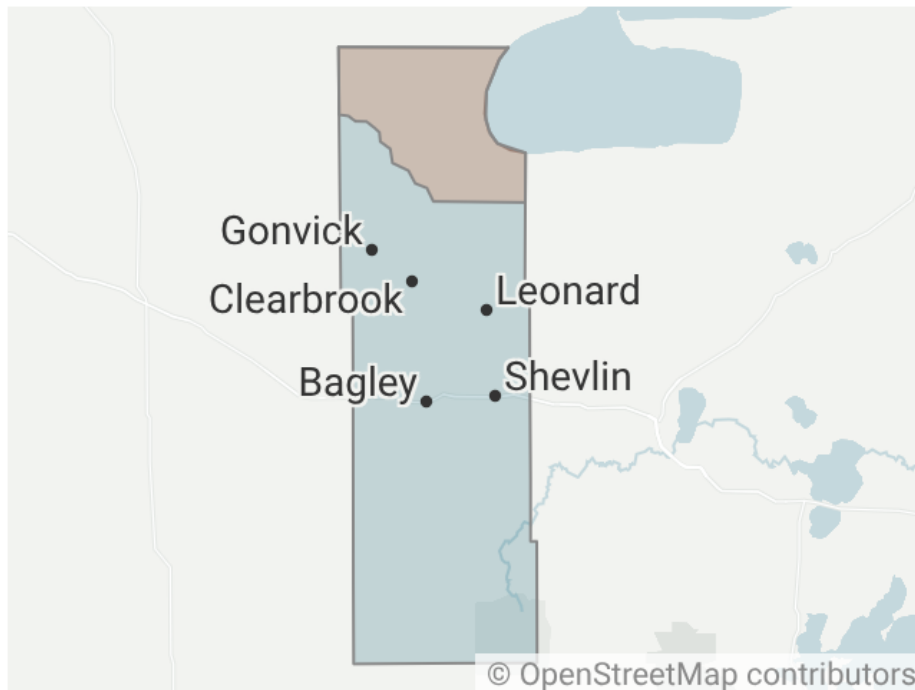
KAXE contacted every candidate three times using contact information submitted to the Secretary of State's Office when they filed for office. Candidate responses have not been edited and are published as submitted.

As necessary, our news team added contextual information and corrected inaccuracies, marked with editor's notes in italics.

Please contact us at news@kaxe.org with questions or comments or to report any errors.

About Clearwater County districts

One of the races in this guide will only be on some Clearwater County voters' ballots: the race for Red Lake School Board. Check the map below to see if you live in this district.



Created with Datawrapper

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: DEMOCRATS



Luke Gulbranson
lukegulbranson.com



John Munter
munterforcongress.substack.com



Trina Swanson
trinaforcongress.com
Party endorsed

Candidate campaign website as reported to the Minnesota Secretary of State.

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: DEMOCRATS



Age on Election Day: 42

Community: I live in Eveleth, where I was born and raised.

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? I am a small businessman and hockey coach. My main small business is a maple syrup company.

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. My lived experience has prepared and motivated me to run for office. I am a fourth generation Iron Ranger, and my family really struggled growing up. We got by with the help of government programs like food assistance, free school lunches, and energy assistance. When my dad was able to get a union job with the 49ers, life got more stable. From these experiences, I understand the people of the district and the struggles they face, the importance of good union jobs and the stability they provide, and the importance of protecting programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid that are currently under threat.

Luke Gulbranson

Why are you running? I am running because for too long, working people and the middle class have been getting the short end of the stick. Pete Stauber, and far too many members of Congress, are looking out for themselves and the wealthy. We need a representative who will fight selflessly, not selfishly, every day so that working families can live and thrive in Minnesota.

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I will fight everyday for the people of the North and Central Minnesota in Congress. First, we have to win, and as an Iron Ranger, union member, and small business owner - I am the best candidate to take on Pete Stauber. I'm running because families across the 8th district are struggling. Their costs are going up and their wages are nowhere near keeping up. And who is Pete Stauber looking out for? The big money and special interests calling the shots. I'm not a politician and I'm not running to serve the rich and the powerful. I'm running to serve my friends and neighbors in Minnesota so they get a fair shot and a voice in their future.

What are your top three priorities, if elected? Please describe specific policy goals. My top three priorities are to lower the cost of essential goods and services, protect Social Security and Medicare, and stand up for unions and workers. First, to lower the cost of essentials, I will tackle the rising cost of healthcare head-on. On protecting Social Security and Medicare, I will support and vote for a bill that reverses

the barbaric cuts made to these programs in the One Big Ugly Bill. Finally, as someone who understands the power of a union job, I will stand up for unions and working people. I will advocate for fair working conditions at all places of work and accountability for corporations that treat their employees unfairly.

What are your natural resources policy positions? My grandfather was a foreman at the Oliver mine. My uncles and dad were heavy equipment operators and Local 49 union members. I know that mining is not only a path to the middle class for thousands of people but the backbone of towns across the district. I also have always had a deep love of the outdoors, like so many people across this district. I don't support mining in the area near the Boundary Waters and would have voted no on Pete Stauber's bill that ends protection for that piece of federal land. The Boundary Waters are too important to us, to our water, to our way of life here. However, I support mining, including copper-nickel mining, at currently operating mines and at proposed sites under development if companies meet all rules and regulations necessary to do so.

(continued on page 7)

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: DEMOCRATS

Luke Gulbranson (continued)

How would you ensure constituents who didn't vote for you still feel represented?

We send one person to Washington DC to be accountable and responsive to each and every person across our district, and I would always work hard to do that if elected. It would be a priority to hire excellent staff representative of the district, to return home and be present in the district outside of session, and to hold regular town hall meetings across the district.

What would you do if what's best for your district differed from your party's position on an issue?

I'm running for Congress to represent this district. Not a party. Not a president. And certainly not corporations and the wealthy - which is why I will not accept a dime of Corporate PAC money. Every decision I make will be based on conversations with constituents right here at home.

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: DEMOCRATS



Age on Election Day: 77
Community: Warba, MN

John Munter

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I have had published in the Duluth News Tribune countless opinion pieces on the issues of the day for the past six years. I feel, also, that I have the best appreciation of many conservative viewpoints betrayed by the current Administration and MN 8 Congress Member as well as liberal viewpoints. See MunterforCongress.substack.com

How would you ensure constituents who didn't vote for you still feel represented?

We all want the same things-- jobs, housing, and health care and I look forward to debating the fine points of issues with everyone. I think we all have the common sense that we can no longer afford this extended American empire and need to focus on economies at home.

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? I am retired on my hobby farm and work as an author.

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. I look for solutions. During the Line 3 pipeline hearings I was solely responsible for pushing the State to remove defunct pipelines from private properties with my study showing the pipes were not too close together to be removed safely.

Why are you running? I may be old but I can do my age in push-ups and am mentally agile. For example, 21 corporations in Duluth own 10 or more single family homes which should be reserved for young people building equity-- addressed perhaps by taxation, 300 foot separations, or national private equity bans.

What are your top three priorities, if elected? Please describe specific policy goals. Jobs, housing, and health care--1) rejecting the data center and copper nickel mining because they threaten more jobs than they create. I support taxes on AI chips and tokens to pay for the white collar job apocalypse retraining 2) I support Ro Khanna's plan to create 3 million more homes paid for with windfall profits tax on oil companies as well as a nation-wide ban on private equity buying up single family homes. I support single payer health care which cuts the cost by half and group buying by the US of pharmaceuticals.

What are your natural resources policy positions? Copper nickel mining in Northern Minnesota is stupid in creating toxic waste piles threatening our hospitality. fishing, and tourism industries. The iron ore industry should do better in mercury reduction. Pulsar Helium is non-polluting and promising hundreds of jobs in years to come with great drilling results.

What would you do if what's best for your district differed from your party's position on an issue?

They can go jump in Lake Superior. I have always thought the Ukraine War was stupid in pushing NATO nukes 6 minutes fly time to Moscow-- and aid to Israel in the Gaza genocide was evil. The current US Military-Israel fusion (Section 224 of the NDAA) is treasonous but 94% of Congress takes money from the Israeli lobby. Ro Khanna and Thomas Massie are my heroes for getting some Epstein files released working across the aisle.

Editor's note: Roughly 94% of current members of Congress have accepted campaign funds from pro-Israel lobbyists, according to [Track AIPAC](#).

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: DEMOCRATS



Trina Swanson

will use my experience in foreign policy, national security, immigration, and public service to hit the ground running on day one.

Why are you running? I grew up in a working-class home in Hermantown. My Mom was a nurse, and my Dad was a carpenter, later working at the paper mill. Our kitchen conversations weren't about politics. They were about making ends meet, looking out for neighbors, and believing that if you worked hard enough, you could build a comfortable life. I learned that unions strengthen the middle class, that communities thrive when people show up for each other, and that honest work should buy you a life with dignity, not constant insecurity. That's not happening in northern and central Minnesota. The current Representative is putting corporate interests and profits before the working people trying to raise families and retire with dignity. I want to continue my service to this country as an elected official, drawing upon the experience and leadership skills I gained as a 25-year public servant.

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? Competence, experience, leadership, integrity, grit. These are the traits I will bring to the job on day one. This election is far too important to put forward a candidate without the experience to do the job. I understand the issues. I worked in Washington, D.C. I know why Washington works, but more importantly, why it doesn't work. I spent my career serving under both parties, bringing people with diverse backgrounds and opinions to

the table, identifying solutions, and building coalitions to implement those solutions. Congress needs to get back to this approach, crossing the aisle to solve problems. Furthermore, I am the Candidate that can win in November. I have already shown up for public forums in all 21 counties, answered unscripted questions, and engaged on complicated issues. I earned the DFL endorsement in May on the very first ballot with over 70% of delegates voting for me.

What are your top three priorities, if elected? Please describe specific policy goals. Universal healthcare, proper federal funding for childcare, schools, hospitals, and programs the working class relies upon, and attracting new industries with good-paying jobs to the district. I will fight from day one for universal healthcare. We get to decide what our values are and how we spend our money. We currently have a representative who supports cuts to programs that the middle class relies upon, so the 1% can receive greater tax breaks. Minnesota pays more in federal taxes than it receives back in federal funding. I will fight for Minnesota to receive proper federal funding, rather

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Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? JET Global Solutions, LLP, Founding Partner and Attorney

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. I began my career as a public servant at just 18 years old at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. This was my job throughout college and law school. I then joined U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, where I served for almost 20 years. I represented our country in Minnesota, Washington, D.C., Germany, and Kenya. I led international operations and national emergency responses, combated national security and criminal threats, and ensured immigration benefits were granted lawfully, all while working for administrations of both parties, to keep Americans safe. I left a career I loved when I was asked to do things I believed were unethical. I

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: DEMOCRATS

Trina Swanson (continued)

than placing the responsibility on the state, resulting in property tax increases. I will advocate for new industry investment like clean energy and green steel production, with good-paying union jobs. People should be able to stay in the communities they love, raise families, and retire with dignity.

What are your natural resources policy positions?

Generations to come must be able to enjoy this amazing land we call home. We must ensure we have clean water. That means we use science, the experts, and regulatory processes to ensure corporations use the most advanced technological means in their industries to minimize the impact on the environment and manage natural resources sustainably. I will ensure proper funding for federal agencies with oversight of our natural resources, to include returning to proper staffing levels after DOGE cuts, and reopening offices that closed, like the U.S. Forest Service research facility in Grand Rapids. Mining cannot be allowed in the BWCA watershed. However, we can continue to advance technologies for mining in the Iron Range, and hold corporations accountable, so mining is done in a responsible manner, minimizing the impact on the environment and water.

How would you ensure constituents who didn't vote for you still feel represented?

I will show up. A Representative is just that, a representative of all people in their district. I will continue to show up in all 21 counties. This district is so vast and varied that what's most important to one area may not be the most important issue in another. I will make decisions based on what I think is best for the greatest number of people in the district. In order to do this, I will engage. I will have offices staffed around the district, so constituents feel heard. I will hold town halls in person, without requiring prescreened questions. I will explain why I voted for or against a bill, take feedback, and learn and grow. But, this all starts by electing people with integrity, who understand the issues and the implications for the district. I am that person for CD-8.

What would you do if what's best for your district differed from your party's position on an issue?

I will fight for what's best for the district. I am not running for office for power or to spend decades in the position. It is time to break out of voting party lines and instead come together in Congress to solve problems. For too long now, each side tries to score political points and win elections by politicizing serious issues like immigration, the future of Social Security, taxes, and health care. Rather than worrying about the next election cycle, Representatives need to govern, represent the people, and get things done. We have seen a Congress unwilling to stand up to this Administration and the dangerous implications of their unwillingness. I will take my oath seriously, an oath to defend the Constitution, rather than a party or administration. That's what I did in my 25-year career as a public servant.

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: REPUBLICANS



Anthony Hamilton

anthonyhamiltonforcongress.com



Pete Stauber*

petestauberforcongress.com

*Incumbent
Party endorsed*

*Candidate did not respond to KAXE's survey.

Candidate campaign website as reported to the Minnesota Secretary of State.

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: REPUBLICANS



Age on Election Day: 43
Community: Mora

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? I am a farmer. I farm my own land.

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. Our founders never intended for Congress to create career politicians. They envisioned citizen legislators to temporarily occupy these seats. Farmers, veterans, tradesmen, working class people who would step away from their lives to serve and return home. That is the tradition I intend to keep. I am a farmer, my qualification isn't a resume built inside Washington rubbing elbows with lobbyists. It's a lifetime of solving real problems with limited resources. I know what the cost of gas, doctor bills, grocery costs, vet bills, and when the harvest doesn't go as planned, do to a monthly budget. The 8th district is full of people who work with their hands, manage their own finances, and deal with the

Anthony Hamilton

consequences of decisions made by people who have never lived anything close to their lives. I am one of those people. That is my qualification.

Why are you running? I'm running because I'm no longer willing to sit and watch our government act this corrupt. I spent years doing what most people do, calling and emailing my representative, hoping someone would listen. Nobody did. Our government isn't broken, it's corrupt and there is a difference between those two words. Broken things can be fixed by accident. Corrupt things are working exactly as designed, just not for you and me. Lobbyists write our laws. Members of Congress trade stocks on information you and I will never have. The government shuts down and the people who caused it still get paid. I got tired of waiting for someone else to fix it. So I wrote the CAPT Act. A five-part reform bill covering stock trading bans, lobbying restrictions, salary accountability, attendance requirements, and term limits. I'm serious about this, I am willing to go do it myself. That's why I'm running.

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I am not a performance. I don't have a consultant telling me what to say to a donor expecting something in return. I've taken zero PAC money. I don't owe anyone anything except the people in this district. Pete has been in Washington since 2019. Our debt has climbed toward \$40 trillion, our grocery bills have gone up, healthcare costs have gone up, and the lobby

money flowing into his campaign has gone up. That is not a record to run on. That is a record to run from. I'm running because I want my children to grow up knowing their government won't cheat them. That it belongs to them. Right now it doesn't, and Pete is part of the reason why. Voters should choose me because I'm the only candidate in this race who can't be bought. That is not a talking point, it's just the math.

What are your top three priorities, if elected? Please describe specific policy goals. My top priority is congressional reform and real accountability. I authored the CAPT Act, a five part bill that addresses the core corruption that drives every other problem in Washington. One: Term limits. Three in the House and Two in the Senate, no more career politicians feeding at the troughs for decades. Two: End lobbying corruption and foreign money in our legislative process. Lobbyists write our laws, that has to stop. Three: Ban congressional stock trading for every member of Congress and staff. Four: Financial accountability for shutdowns and unbalanced budgets. Shut down the government, lose your salary for the full

(continued on page 13)

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 8: REPUBLICANS

Anthony Hamilton (continued)

duration, no pay back. Every year without a balanced budget triggers a 10% pay cut. Five: Mandatory attendance. Show up and do the job you were elected to do or you don't get paid. Same as every other job in America. Fix Congress first, then fix everything else.

What are your natural resources policy positions?

Minnesota's natural resources belong to the people of this state, not to foreign corporations, not to Chilean mining companies shipping the output to China and then call it American energy independence. I support domestic mining and timber. CD8 was built on resource industries and I will not apologize for that. That doesn't mean we have to risk destroying the Boundary Waters to watch Chilean companies get rich while supplying Chinese domestic production. Pete sponsored opening the watershed to sulfide mining through H.J.140 knowing the outcome and who would benefit. I would not have let this happen.

How would you ensure constituents who didn't vote for you still feel represented?

Every constituent in this district deserves to be heard. That starts with showing up, something that Pete has failed to do. He has not held a single in-person town hall in over seven years in office. That is not representation, that is avoidance. I have been holding town halls before I am even elected. That is the standard I intend to keep. Beyond that, I am looking closely at congressional staffing allowances and how they can be deployed to actually serve constituents across this district, not donors, not lobbyists, not party leadership. People who call my office should reach someone whose job is to listen and help, not manage them. You don't have to agree with me on everything to deserve a representative who answers the phone. That is the baseline and I intend to meet it.

What would you do if what's best for your district differed from your party's position on an issue?

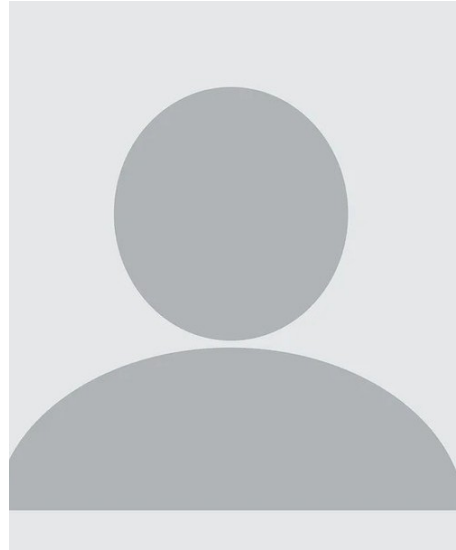
I would unapologetically side with my constituents. That is the job. I am not running to be a reliable party vote, I am running to represent the people of the 8th district. If those two things conflict, there is no conflict, my constituents win every time. This is why I wrote the CAPT Act. A member of Congress who is financially beholden to a party, donor, or PAC cannot make that choice freely. The money owns the vote before the vote is even cast. I don't have that problem. I don't owe anyone anything except the people in this district. The founders didn't design this system for party soldiers. They designed it for citizen legislators who would use their own judgement on behalf of the people they represent. That is the job I am applying for.

CLEARWATER COUNTY SHERIFF

**Voters will select one candidate.
The top two vote-getters will advance to the November ballot.**



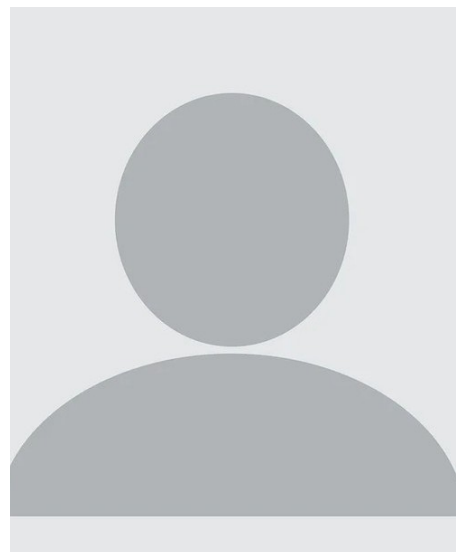
Adam Gunderson



Clarence LaCroix



Vern Wittenberg



Larry D. Johnson*

*Candidate did not respond to KAXE's survey.

CLEARWATER COUNTY SHERIFF

Adam Gunderson



Age on Election Day: 47
Community: Bagley

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? Bagley Police Chief

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. 21 years as a Police Chief

Why are you running? To bring experienced leadership to the Clearwater County Sheriff's Office

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election?
Experienced Law Enforcement leadership

Name a public leader you admire and explain why. There is none at this time.

What is the biggest challenge facing the sheriff's office, and how would you address it if elected? Biggest challenge is retaining experienced officers with the department. I believe that our law-enforcement officers in Clearwater County need a higher wage and better training opportunities to make them want to stay in Clearwater County. In the end, working with the commissioners to provide better wages and training opportunities for deputies.

How would you build effective relationships with other agencies and offices, including tribal law enforcement, the state attorney general's office and other county sheriffs? I would continue reaching out and training with other agencies like I currently do to better foster relationships.

How would you seek to address the intersection of mental health issues and criminal justice in calls for service and your jail? Need to continue to work with mental health professionals as well as state leadership to address the issues of mental health. To help provide training for deputies.

CLEARWATER COUNTY SHERIFF



Clarence LaCroix

Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Investigator for Clearwater County Sheriff's Office
School Resource Officer (Bagley Schools) Clearwater County Sheriff's Office
Bagley Fire Department (9 years)
Copley Township Board (15 years)

Why are you running? To continue serving the citizens of Clearwater County while building a safer and stronger community.

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I respectfully believe my professional law enforcement experience, my prior dedicated service to both our Nation and our community, my steadfast character, as well as my life experiences have prepared me to serve as your sheriff. If elected, I promise to strive to exemplify the qualities of service, respect and integrity.

Name a public leader you admire and explain why. Theodore Roosevelt. Anybody that can finish a speech after being shot.

What is the biggest challenge facing the sheriff's office, and how would you address it if elected? Lack of resources. I would work with the County Board and other community partners to find solutions.

How would you build effective relationships with other agencies and offices, including tribal law enforcement, the state attorney general's office and other county sheriffs?

I would build onto the partnerships that are currently in place. The Sheriff's Office has agreements in place with local agencies, White Earth, surrounding Counties and State Agencies. Clearwater would continue to be active member of the Minnesota Sheriff's Association.

How would you seek to address the intersection of mental health issues and criminal justice in calls for service and your jail? The Mental Health Crisis in Minnesota is the largest problem law enforcement faces. The lack of available local and state resources exacerbates the crisis our state faces. I would seek to increase the use of technology and other recent advancements for use in the jail. Increased training for Jail Staff that focuses on mental health, and cooperative agreements with treatment facilities.

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? Clearwater County Sheriff's Office as a Deputy assigned to the Bagley School District as the School Resource Officer.

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office.

Managed a large budget for a National Company
Mental Health Rehab Worker
Ten years in the Minnesota National Guard
Patrol Officer/Sergeant at the Bagley Police Department
Part-time Patrol Deputy for Clearwater County Sheriff's Office
Jail Administrator for Clearwater County Sheriff's Office

CLEARWATER COUNTY SHERIFF



Age on Election Day: 45
Community: Gonvick

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? Chief Deputy for Clearwater County Sheriff's Office

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. I have 24 years of Law Enforcement Experience with the last 9+ as the Chief Deputy of Clearwater County Sheriff's Office. As Chief Deputy, I serve as second-in-command to the Sheriff, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Sheriff's Office. My responsibilities include managing personnel, coordinating law enforcement activities, assisting with budget oversight, and participating in long-term strategic planning. With 24 years of operational law enforcement experience, I bring proven leadership and a deep, working knowledge of how the Sheriff's Office serves our community both on the street and behind the scenes. I am also currently serving my second term on the Clearbrook-Gonvick school

Vern Wittenberg

board and I am currently the board chairman, this experience has taught me more about public budget oversight and community relations.

Why are you running? I have always desired to achieve the position of Sheriff in my Law Enforcement career and with Sheriff Halverson retiring at the end of this term, I believe that now is a great opportunity for me to continue to expand on the foundation of leadership and values that the Sheriffs before me have laid. I will continue bring stability and trust to the Sheriff's Office and the citizens that we serve.

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? Out of the 4 candidates that are running, I believe that I have the most relevant experience of overseeing the Clearwater County Sheriff's office. With over 9 years as Chief Deputy, I have a current working knowledge of the Sheriff's Office, Jail and employees. I was born and raised in Clearwater County and I've lived most of my life here. I'm committed to Clearwater County and the people that we serve.

Name a public leader you admire and explain why. Sheriff Darin Halverson, he has been a inspirational leader to Clearwater County and has brought a lot of great progress to the Sheriff's Office, under his command, I have learned a great deal and I would intend to build on what he has accomplished.

What is the biggest challenge facing the sheriff's office, and how would you address it if elected? Mental Health of both the public we serve and of law enforcement officers, and those in related fields.

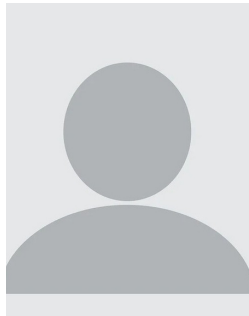
Every day, we deal with people that are experiencing a mental health crisis and the State of Minnesota has limited resources for dealing with these issues. If elected, I would like to give my staff more training on how to deal with these issues on the street, in the jail and resources to help my staff in their own lives as well. Law Enforcement is a high stress job and we need to be able to help ourselves in order to help others.

How would you build effective relationships with other agencies and offices, including tribal law enforcement, the state attorney general's office and other county sheriffs? I am already an active member in the Minnesota Sheriff's Association, and as such, I work closely with other Sheriffs in Minnesota, along with other Law Enforcement agencies within our area including Minnesota State Patrol and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA). I also work closely with officers and administrators in local tribal law enforcement agencies as well as the Clearwater County Attorney's Office.

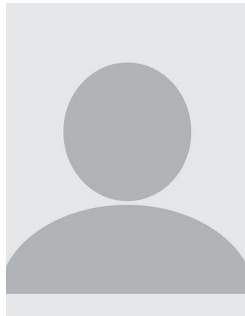
How would you seek to address the intersection of mental health issues and criminal justice in calls for service and your jail? I would provide more resources and relevant training to my staff on mental health and critical incidents, so they can better address these issues both on the street and within the jail.

RED LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

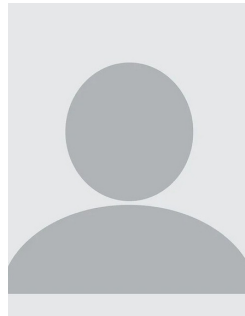
Voters can select up to four candidates.
The top eight vote-getters will advance to the November ballot.



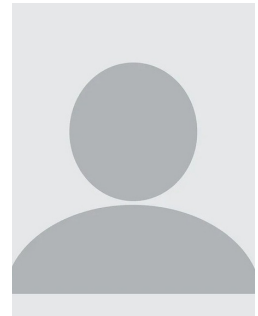
Fawn Beaulieu



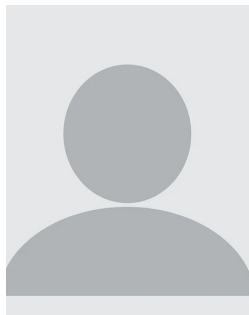
Vestanna Cook*



Nicole Desjarlait*
Incumbent



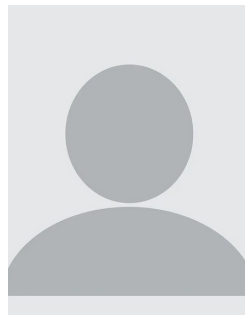
Ryan Holthusen*



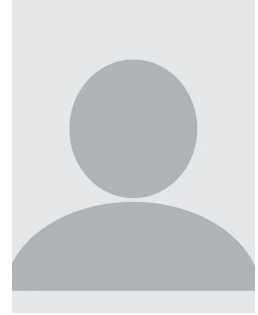
Christopher Jourdain
Incumbent



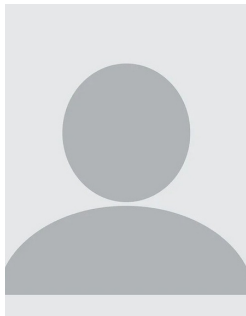
Sharon Kingbird



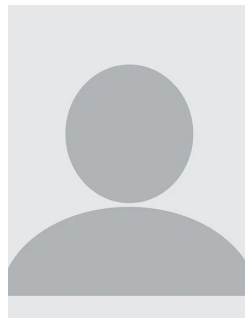
Deanna K. Lasley*



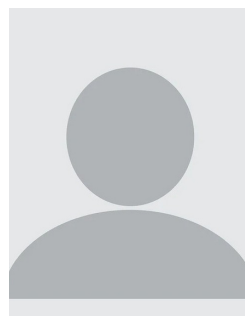
Ron Lussier*



**Deanna
Pemberton***



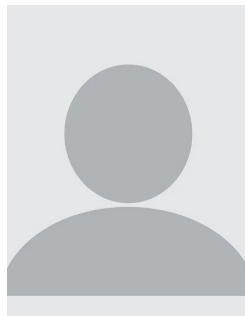
**Robert
Pemberton Sr.***



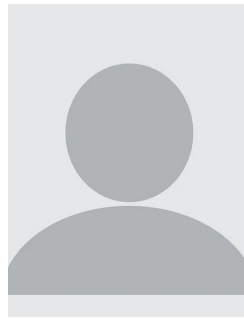
Linda S. Perkins*



**Jennifer
Schoenborn**

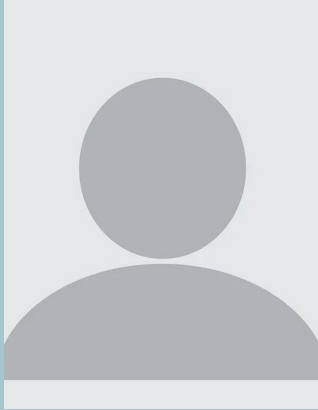


Tina Stately*
Incumbent



**Dustin Thunder-
Harris***

*Candidate did not
respond to KAXE's
survey.



Age on Election Day: 43
Community: Red Lake

Fawn Beaulieu

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I am one who works along side others to make sure that our students come first. My main goal while teaching these past few years was to make sure all students are reaching their full potential. I love empowering students to do their very best, I truly love our community.

Please describe the roles and responsibilities of the office you are running for.

the role of school board members is to provide leadership, accountability, and oversee the school.

Name a public leader you admire and explain why. Peggy Flanagan, We love her in Native Country! She is our Voice at a higher level.

What are your priorities, if elected? Please describe specific goals. With over three years of experience in education, I have seen firsthand the challenges many of our students face, including poor attendance, displacement from their families, and difficult life circumstances. These are real challenges that impact our students ability to learn and succeed.

What do you believe is the biggest challenge facing your district, and how do you plan to address it if elected? I

believe one of the biggest challenges in our district is our schools having the support, resources and staffing needed to meet our students needs. I have seen firsthand the impact that staff shortages, attendances challenges, and limited resources have on both educators and students. I plan on listening to teachers, staff, students and their families and advocating for ways to strengthen systems in our schools.

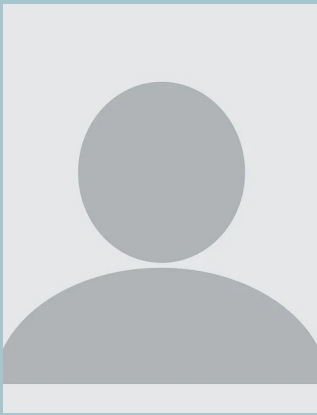
What is one success in the district that you would offer support for as a board member?

One success I would bring to the school board is my experience working in a school environment that successfully strengthened cultural identity, Seven Grandfather Teachings, and language revitalization. Being a teacher for the past three years, I have learned how important it is to put myself in spaces where I can continue to grow, learn, and advocate for our community of children. One day they will be sitting in these very seats and I want to help prepare them, Miigwech.

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? Endazhi-Nitawaaging Charter School.

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. My experience as an educator has provided me with a strong foundation for serving on the school board. I have worked at Endazhi-Nitaawiging Charter School as an elementary school teacher, teaching students general education while also integrating Indigenous language, culture, and traditions into learning.

Why are you running? I have worked with students across multiple grade levels and I care deeply about the future of our students, families, and our community.



Age on Election Day: 51
Community: Little Rock

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? Red Lake Comprehensive Health Services, School Wellness Counselor

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. Serving on the board the past 4 years has helped me learn how to be an effective member, and implement some of my goals which included Ojibwe Language and Culture, along with renewable energy efforts.

Christopher Jourdain

I also like to stay in communication with the staff and students to make sure they are taken care of and feel valued.

Why are you running? To help improve our education system and help make an impact in the future of our community.

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I believe I have the skills, vision, experience and knowledge to continue to be an effective board member.

Please describe the roles and responsibilities of the office you are running for. Learning and implementing policies, making sure they are followed in school operations.

Name a public leader you admire and explain why. I admire leaders who can connect with people, and get them to buy into a vision and work together to make it a reality.

What are your priorities, if elected? Please describe specific goals. Further support the Ojibwe Language and Culture department, support the staff and encourage the students to improve the graduation rate.

What do you believe is the biggest challenge facing your district, and how do you plan to address it if elected? The graduation and attendance rates, I hope to be able to encourage and motivate students to learn the importance of their education.

What is one success in the district that you would offer support for as a board member? The fact that we have local control over our education system is powerful for us.



Age on Election Day: 67
Community: Little Rock,
 Red Lake Mn.

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? Retired Ojibwe culturist teacher.

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. I have been in education for the past 32 years, until May 2026, I was an Ojibwe culturist. My experiences/education include Ojibwe language and culture teacher in Red lake and Bemidji middle school, home/school advocate, parent committee member, mentor, reading tutor and attended National Indian Education Association and Minnesota Indian Education Association for several years. I have received my Ojibwe eminence license and psychology degree.

Sharon Kingbird

Why are you running? I am running for School Board because education matters. Every student who walks through our doors should feel welcomed, valued, and have a sense of belonging.

Our students deserve a safe, healthy learning environment where their well-being and educational goals are supported. Our teachers and staff also deserve the resources and training they need to do their best work - building relationships, empowering students, and honoring the unique identities of every child. This year, 41 students graduated - the largest graduating class since 2017. that is something our community can be proud of, and I want to see that success continue to grow. Every student should have the opportunity to experience the pride and accomplishment of reaching graduation.

It takes a village to raise our future generations. Through our language, culture, traditions, families and schools, we can help every student succeed.

Miigwech

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I believe voters should choose me because I bring 32 years of experience in education and a genuine commitment to our students and families. I believe every student deserves a quality education and the support they need to reach their educational goals.

Strong schools are built on teamwork. That means open communication between our schools and families from

Early Childhood through 12th grade, working together to help every student succeed. As your school board member, I will be approachable, supportive and ready to listen. I value your ideas, your concerns and your voice, and I will always do my best to represent our community with honesty and respect.

Please describe the roles and responsibilities of the office you are running for.

The Officers approve minutes of the board meetings, they set policies, they listen to financial reports and program budgets, they vote on hiring and non-renewal of superintendent contracts and make decisions that also reflect the interest of the community members. This is only a few example of the roles and responsibilities of the board.

Name a public leader you admire and explain why. Dr.

Anton "Waagosh" Treuer because of his efforts to revitalize the Ojibwe language, spirituality and culture. He is a great roll model for a whole generation of young Anishinaabeg. He is known for the many books that he has written on native culture and language and has presented at conferences and gatherings throughout the United States on this topic.

(continued on page 22)

Sharon Kingbird (continued)

What are your priorities, if elected? Please describe specific goals.

My priorities are the students and being available to families and my goal is to have more contact with students and families. Another priority is to continue the rise in graduation rates, my goal is looking at and maintain what has been successful and work on what needs to be improved. Another priority are the many students who have left our district, I would like to identify who they are, gather data with the ultimate goal of retaining them back to our district.

What do you believe is the biggest challenge facing your district, and how do you plan to address it if elected?

The biggest challenge to me is community and school communication. How this can be addressed is by a greater response time of communication between parents and school staff, having school/ community gatherings and possible student lead activities.

What is one success in the district that you would offer support for as a board member?

One success has been implementing Ojibwe language and culture into the classrooms, and throughout the building and I will continue to support and advocate for this success.



Age on Election Day: 42
Community: Red Lake

Where are you currently employed, and what is your role? I work for Red Lake Comprehensive Health Services as a school based Wellness Counselor. I am also a Mental Health Practitioner on the Crisis Response team.

Please share any prior experience and education that you believe qualifies you for office. I have worked with the youth on the Red Lake Nation for almost two decades, in varying roles with in my community. I have been a school based Wellness Counselor at the Secondary Complex for over 10 years. I am passionate about supporting and advocating for our students. I work closely with school staff and have the unique opportunity to understand the policy and practices of the school District. I have always valued education, I was valedictorian

Jennifer Schoenborn

of my graduating class from Red Lake High School. I went on to get my Associates of Arts degree and have completed additional college classes towards finishing my degree. I also have my Community Health Worker certificate. I am able to organize public events.

Why are you running? I would like to serve my community further by being a school board member. I would like to be a voice for our youth, families and community members. I am strongly invested in my communities wellbeing and this extends to the school that educates them. I would like to share my idea's and knowledge to help guide the school districts educational policies. I want to represent my tribal community and support the school to reflect and honor our traditional values.

Why should voters choose you to advance to the general election? I would proudly represent our tribe and make sure our voices are heard. I am a very open minded person and am always listening to learn. I am non-bias and I work well with others. I am a good listener, a strong advocate and I am not afraid to speak up on issues. I am able to make tough decisions. I and my family are passionate about being involved with my community.

Please describe the roles and responsibilities of the office you are running for. As a school board member our role is to ensure school policy serves the students and community.

Name a public leader you admire and explain why. I admire Deb Haaland because she achieved many goals because of her hard work and dedication.

What are your priorities, if elected? Please describe specific goals. The graduation rate is low, I would like to understand why and help students over come barriers they may face to preventing them from being successful students and into adulthood. I would like to see the practices of the school come from a trauma informed lens to create a safe, caring and supportive environment. I want to see support and prioritization of student wellbeing with more drug and suicide prevention within the school district.

(continued on page 24)

Jennifer Schoenborn (continued)

What do you believe is the biggest challenge facing your district, and how do you plan to address it if elected?

I would like to see our graduation rate increase. Our students face many challenges. I believe improving the environment within the school so students feel understood, valued and truly supported will increase the number of students who make it to graduation. I would like to connect students and families to resources in the community and help them achieve educational goals.

What is one success in the district that you would offer support for as a board member?

It was wonderful to see the large graduating class this year. I believe a wonderful strength of the school currently is the access students have to mental health supports. Red Lake Comprehensive Health has grown their school based wellness counseling supports services. This is unique for students to have a large number of counselors and quick access to support. I would also like to see more of our children go to college and increased encouragement for continuing their education reflected in the school. I would like to see how the school board can help motivate students further their education after graduation.