

## BRIEFS

### Swanson re-elected for Region Nine

**MANKATO** — Sibley County Commissioner Jim Swanson was re-elected to a second term as chairman of the Region Nine Development Commission at the commission's annual meeting last week.

Lake Crystal Mayor Brad Ahrenstorff was appointed vice chairman, with St. James Mayor Gary Sturm and Sleepy Eye Mayor James Broich named to the positions of treasurer and secretary.

The commission — which aims to promote the development of the region through intergovernmental cooperation, community and human development, long-range planning and technical assistance — has 37 members. All are elected officials from counties, cities, townships and school boards in Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan counties.

The Region Nine Development Commission was established in 1972 following the Minnesota Legislature's passage of the Regional Development Act of 1969.

### Night to Unite set for Aug. 27

**MANKATO** — Summer is slipping away, college students will be returning soon and it's time to start planning that annual Mankato Night to Unite neighborhood gathering.

This year's citywide event will take place from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Aug. 27. Police officers, firefighters and other city employees and officials will be available to stop by parties taking place during that time.

Last year's Night to Unite had 53 neighborhood parties throughout Mankato. The date was shifted to late August a few years ago so college students could be included.

For more information about the event contact city staff at 311 or 387-8600.

### Morgan teen hurt in crash

**MORGAN** — An 18-year-old Morgan woman was injured in a two-vehicle crash between Morgan and New Ulm on Wednesday afternoon.

Allison Madsen was eastbound on Brown County Road 29 when her Pontiac G6 and a 2005 Sterling truck collided at the Highway 4 intersection. Madsen stopped at a stop sign before pulling in front of the southbound truck driven by Jeremy Walters, 28, of New Ulm, a State Patrol report said.

Madsen was taken to a the hospital in Sleepy Eye to be treated for injuries that were not life threatening, the report said. Walters was not injured in the crash, which was reported at about 1:20 p.m.

For more local, state and national news visit [www.mankatofreepress.com](http://www.mankatofreepress.com).

# Plane crashes near Beauford

## Pilot, passenger walk away; report left on voicemail

By Dan Nienaber  
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**BEAUFORD** — Investigators are saying an Albert Lea pilot and his passenger were lucky to walk away from a private plane that crashed in Beauford Township on Tuesday.

Lucas Elliott Schuster, 26, was flying the four-seat Piper Tri-Pacer plane when it crashed in a cornfield

just south of County Road 4 at about 5 p.m., said Capt. Rich Murry of the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Department. The field is about three miles southeast of Beauford, which is a small town about 10 miles south of Mankato along Highway 22.

Schuster told deputies he and his brother, 19-year-old Jeremiah James Schuster,

had taken off from the Wells Municipal Airport about 45 minutes before the crash.

Lucas Schuster attempted to land on County Road 4 after the plane's engine lost power but ended up in the cornfield instead.

The plane flipped on to its top during the crash landing about 300 feet south of the road. Schuster called the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Department after the crash, but he reached a number that had voicemail. He left a mes-

sage, but deputies didn't hear it until Wednesday morning, Murry said.

Jeremiah Schuster was visiting from Australia and the brothers had planned a scenic flight around the area. Neither received any injuries in the crash.

Deputies, Federal Aviation Administration investigators and Lucas Schuster met at the crash site Wednesday. Murry said it took awhile for deputies to find the plane because it was flipped on its top and

only a small portion of its wheels could be seen over the corn.

The cause of the crash will be investigated by the FAA, Murry said. The plane was severely damaged and considered a total loss.

"From our end, there's nothing more to investigate," Murry said. "When we met with the FAA investigators, they did say it was amazing they walked away. They did a nice job landing."

## Securing jobs toughest obstacle for

# REFUGEES



John Cross

The Mankato Area Refugee Community Consortium held a panel discussion on refugees and the importance of jobs Wednesday at the Mankato Public Safety Center. The panelists were (from left) Mohamed Abdulkadir, Marcia Highum, Jessica O'Brien and Paralia Okwot. The discussion was moderated by Bukata Hayes.

## Panel discusses triumphs and tribulations

By Robb Murray  
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**MANKATO** — One of the biggest stumbling blocks to a refugee getting a foothold in the United States is employment.

That's why the Mankato Area Refugee Community Consortium spent its most recent panel discussion on Wednesday talking about the benefits of and barriers to hav-

ing jobs for refugees.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for the power of work came from Paralia Okwot, who told her story of being born in Ethiopia. She was 12 when fighting started in her community, and her family was forced to flee.

She lived in Kenya for four years before coming to the U.S. and settling in Boston. Living in Boston was expensive, she said, and work

was nearly impossible to find.

She moved to Mankato because she had family here, and things changed immediately. It was much easier to get access to government services, and within a few months she'd found part-time work at MRCI. Seven months later, when her English improved and she had some work experience, she applied

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## One of three busted in coke sting sent to prison

By Dan Nienaber  
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**MANKATO** — A series of drug deals that spanned from February through June 2012 has resulted in a prison sentence for one of three people charged as a result of Mankato drug sting.

James Arthur Mal-

lett Jr., 29, of Brooklyn Park was sentenced to four years in prison this week by District Court Judge Bradley Walker. With credit for good time and the 429 days he has already served in jail, he could be released in about 18 months.

He was charged after

an accomplice, 31-year-old Donny Emery-Lee Lawson, was arrested after a police chase through the River Hills Mall parking lot, along Highway 22 and on Highway 14. Lawson had sold cocaine to an undercover agent with the Minnesota River Valley Drug Task Force.

The chase reached speeds of 50 mph through the parking lot and on Highway 22, and 100 mph on Highway 14.

That June 4, 2012, drug sale was one of several during a sting that started about four months earlier. Mallett, Lawson

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## Vikes targeted for drive-by fan rootings

### Camp kicks off next week in Mankato

By Brian Ojanpa  
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**MANKATO** — Lest the Minnesota Vikings feel unloved when they arrive in town next Thursday, plans have been made to shower them with staged affection.

A series of 2-4 p.m. July 25 tailgate parties will greet players and coaches as they wend their vehicles to annual training camp at Minnesota State University.

"We want to do what we can so the Vikings can feel the love of the community — and keep signing those (camp) contracts," Visit Mankato President Anna Thill said of the first-time event that encourages people to come and wave pom poms and blow Vikings horns that will be distributed while supplies last.

Thill said the tailgate parties idea was inspired by the designated cheer zones to spur on runners during the annual Mankato Marathon.

She said the tailgate parties at four locations in and near Mankato were chosen based on spectator safety and parking availability and on the route players will take through the community.

"Hopefully, they'll honk or make some kind of sign and play along with us a little bit," Thill said. "Let's give it a go and see what happens."

Participants are encouraged to pre-register for the gatherings by going to [visitmankatomn.com](http://visitmankatomn.com).

The four locations are Minnesota Square Park in St. Peter, Dairy Queen across from Mankato West High School, First Congregational United Church of Christ at the corner of Stoltzman and Stadium roads, and on the MSU campus at the corner of Stadium Road and Ellis Avenue.

Training camp opens July 26 and runs through Aug. 14.

Discounts up to **40%** by combining Auto with Home, Renters or Life.

# HATANPA

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