



SCREEN MAKING IMPROVEMENTS

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SCREEN MAKING IMPROVEMENTS BY: MIKE WAKEEN

The screen making department has gone through many changes in 2021. It has been challenging to meet the needs of our internal customers, so we explored different ways to improve.

One of the ways we are improving in screen making is through automation. Screen makers have to handle screens up to 30 times, requiring an employee to retrieve them from the press, wipe off the ink, clean it, wash it, prepare it for new emulsion, image, develop, wash out, dry, tape, block out, and inspect to have a screen ready to return to the press. This involved lifting and moving frames multiple times, with some as large as 60" x 79", and direct contact with chemicals. Automation helps reduce the number of touches per screen and makes the processes more efficient and consistent.

Early in 2021, we purchased a Dane 250 to wash the ink and emulsion off screens automatically. Now, we simply remove the tape from the screen, stage it in a 10-screen feed magazine, and the Dane automatically washes the ink out, removes the emulsion, and then gives a final rinse before releasing it into a clean screen magazine. The frames can then be inspected, hazed, and degreased for coating. This is a much safer and cleaner process for our employees.

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SAVING GREEN WHILE BEING GREEN BY: JENNIFER SCHLOESSER

Tips for saving on your energy cost:



Who needs energy? I know I need lots of it. Kid(s) running you in circles, leaving lights on in their wake, and driving them to and from different events. What about work stress? Early mornings, long days, leaving you fatigued, tired, and exhausted? Never feel like you have enough energy to get through your day?

That's an energy crisis. Sometimes we're so wrapped up in the day-to-day activities, we find it hard to make improvements when it comes to expenses. As winter comes along, how can we keep our energy costs down? Being green while saving green can help, just with a little attention into what is costing you money.

According to the US Energy Information Administration, a typical family spends more than \$1,400 per year on utilities. However, with inflation rates, energy use will cost more this winter than the previous years. With a few tweaks to your energy use, you could save money and reduce the impact on your pocketbook.

Here are ten items to check that can effectively save you money:

1. Check seals on windows, doors, and appliances. Windows are a significant portion of your energy bill. Depending on the size of your home, 15% - 20% of your heat could escape through the windows.
2. Fix the leaks. Check water faucets, foundation cracks, and ductwork. Leaks mean money, and fixing ductwork improves the efficiency of heating and cooling systems.
3. Give your thermostat a nudge. Programming your thermostat to reduce your temperature by 10 - 15° while you sleep or when you're away could save up to 10% on your bills.
4. Adjust your fridge and freezer temperature. The ideal temperature for the fridge is 38°, and the freezer is between 0° and 5 degrees.
5. Swap out your lightbulbs. Look for Energy Star labels when selecting lightbulbs. Switch to LED in high-use areas.
6. Use smart power strips. Some electronic gadgets never truly power off. The little



GREEN COMMITTEE

Jennifer Schloesser.....	Creative Director
Amy Bettis.....	Small Value Stream Supervisor
Cathy Buttell.....	Project Manager
Keith Cook.....	R&D
Jeff Gierok.....	Electrical Technician

blue lights are always receiving power, even when they're not in use. Plug these electronics into a smart power strip, which cuts off the current when the devices are idle. Turning off your computer's monitor can save as much as two-thirds of a computer's energy.

The next four items relate to water reduction. According to the department of energy, hot water usage is the second-largest expense powering most homes. Cutting back on hot water can make a sizable dent in our overall energy bill.



7. Take shorter showers. Trimming two minutes off your shower time will save on energy and up to five gallons of water.

8. Replace your shower head. Look for WaterSense labels when purchasing a new shower head, an efficient shower head can reduce your water usage by 2,700 gallons per year.

9. Don't wash clothes in hot water. Using warm or cold water will cut your pre-load energy use by at least half.

10. Adjust the water heater temperature. Default heaters are typically set at 140 degrees. Lowering to 120 degrees can reduce your water heating costs up to 10 percent. Going out of town? Lower to the lowest setting.

For more questions or help finding ways to improve, contact your local energy provider to have them perform an energy audit on your home. Many times, this is done for free, and they can help identify potential areas that could save you money. Your energy provider may also provide rebates for energy-saving home improvements, such as HVAC systems and window replacements that will provide energy-efficient upgrades. When purchasing new appliances or permanent upgrades to your home, look for Energy Star products and do research for the best products that meet your needs.

Getting back to our initial energy crisis mentioned, try these helpful tips to boost your energy at home and at work: eat your breakfast, practice yoga techniques, sing your favorite tune, drink plenty of water, eat a handful of almonds or peanuts, smell some cinnamon or peppermint, exercise—a 10-minute walk might be just what you need. Get some sunshine, refuel your body with healthy snacks, and hang out with upbeat friends.

For more information on boosting your energy, check out this article: <https://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/boost-energy>



Energy savings resources: nerdwallet.com, CNBC.com

GREEN MASTERS PROGRAM

Empire received the Green Masters Program Certification from the Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council for our sustainability initiatives in 2021. Way to go, everyone!



2021 Green Masters Program Certification

The Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council recognizes and awards

Empire Screen Printing LLC
for achieving the Green Professional designation.

As a Green Professional, Empire Screen Printing LLC has taken significant actions in each area of sustainability identified within the Green Masters Program Certification.

Jessy Serra Ortiz
Jessy Serra Ortiz
Managing Director, Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council



The Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council is an affiliate of the WISCONSIN WMEP. This certification is printed on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Chain of Custody (COC) certified paper, which is made from 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper and processed chlorine free. Made in Wisconsin. 800/368-6867. © 2021 WSC.



SCREEN MAKING IMPROVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

To support the use of the chemicals within the Dane, we purchased a new still to recycle ink wash. This practice is in line with our sustainability policy, to incorporate activities and procedures that will reduce our impact on the environment as well as improve the quality of health and wellness of the employees. We are looking into recycling all the water in screen making for future improvements.

We also introduced a CST laser exposure unit. The original process required physically loading and unloading the exposure unit, doing the same with the developer, and again moving it to the dryer. This is a considerable amount of screen handling and lifting.

In preparation for this equipment, we added a 10-screen feed magazine, automatic developer, and a drying magazine. This automated process allows us to load the exposure magazine, and the rest is automated. Screens go directly to the inspection area from there. This removed eight handling steps per screen by implementing this new process. With a full magazine, this eliminates 80 handling steps within the process.

Our goals are to continue automating and improving the screen making area, making it a safer and more efficient process.

WTC TRAINING FOR MANAGERS BY: MIKE WAKEEN

Twenty of our managers and supervisors got the opportunity to go through WWTC Emerging Leaders Training. The training was held on-site at Empire, with classes every other Friday. Instructors came prepared and ready to teach, and we all came excited and ready to learn. The instructors were terrific, with classes that were hands-on and interactive. Everyone participated and took something from each and every lesson.

The first subject was "Communicating in Today's Work Environment," going over different and more effective means of listening and communicating messages clearly.

Second was "Embracing and Activating the Value of Teamwork," showing ways to promote involvement and showing us that we can accomplish any challenge when we're all a part of the solution.

Third class was "Emotional Intelligence." We learned how our emotions and reactions to certain situations can cause them to escalate or improve, going over methods to manage difficult scenarios with employees and promoting growth.

Subject four was "Managing Projects and Processes." This taught best practices for improving processes, staying within scope, and seeing ideas through to the end.

Fifth class was "Cultivating Culture," showing us how it's important for each of us to lead based on our mission statement and core values.

The last topic was "Conflict Resolution." This showed how to work through issues and conflicts with coworkers and employees, using clear communication about expected behavior and outcomes.

The classes were a success, with lessons that can be applied to our daily activities. We also learned some things about each other.

Thanks to everyone that participated: JR Johnson, Zach Johnson, Candy Amann, Levi Adank, Randy Lemke, Russ Kuehn, Jennifer Schloesser, Guy Gregerson, Fawn Marsh, Sheldon True, Steve Johnson, Sheila Albers, Jim Weber, Shane Hulbert, Jamie Sanders, Tom Donaldson, Amy Bettis, Jared Papenfuss, Lisa Massoth, and Mike Wakeen.

CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST

Each year, Empire prints two calendars that are sent out to our customers and reps. One of the calendars is the full year on a single 11" x 17" page. The other is a small, month-by-month flip calendar. Each calendar features photos from employees throughout the company. All employees are welcome to participate in the calendar photo contest by submitting up to 5 photos by the deadline. Then, fellow employees vote on their favorite photos. The pictures with the most votes are then featured in our calendars. The theme for our 2022 calendar is "Looking Through Our Lens..." Check out the winning pictures!



Codi Jacobs



Heather Reinsvold



Angie Severson



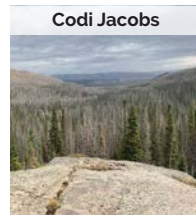
Annie Anderson



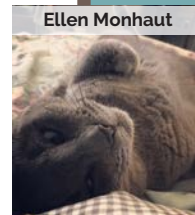
Cathy Buttell



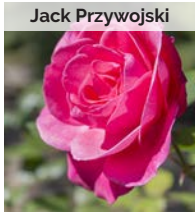
Clark Martin



Codi Jacobs



Ellen Monhaut



Jack Przywojski



Jack Przywojski



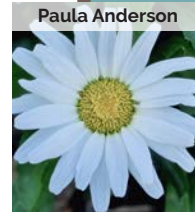
Jake Hulbert



Jennifer Schloesser



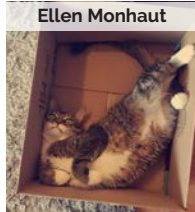
Mai Khang



Paula Anderson



Emily Syring



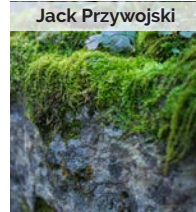
Ellen Monhaut



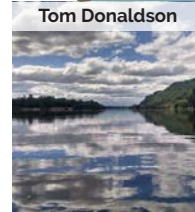
Kevin Gerstenberger



Steve Nelson



Jack Przywojski



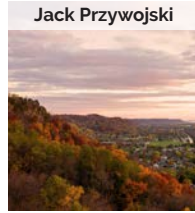
Tom Donaldson



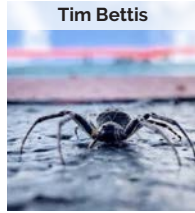
Daniel Puent



Heather Reinsvold



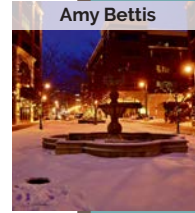
Jack Przywojski



Tim Bettis



Angie Severson



Amy Bettis

TOYS FOR TOTS

In October, we sent out a customer satisfaction survey to all of our customers. For each survey that was submitted, we donated \$5 to the La Crosse Jaycees "Toys For Tots" program. In total, we had 80 surveys submitted, making our donation \$400! Thank you to those who took the time to take the survey!



HALLOWEEN BY: ELLEN MONHAUT
 We hosted a variety of Halloween events happening around Empire this year. First, there was a candy guessing game. Candy was placed in jars and employees were able to guess how many pieces were in the jars. The people who got closest to the correct number without going over were our winners. Our three candy winners were: Chyanne Klotz (hardtooling), Tanya Thompson (auto emp), and Roman Kamrowski (screenmaking). Congratulations on the sweet treats!

There was also a murder mystery, where clues were released the week prior to Halloween. Employees had until November 1 to submit their answers. This year, we had five winners who all won Kwik Trip gift cards. The winners were: Matt Vanderloop, Jack Przywojski, Jenny Ledman, Dustin Maule, and Nick Lubinsky—all from the art department. Good sleuthing!

Empire also catered lunch for employees on all shifts. On Thursday, October 28, there was a taco bar for employees on all shifts. On Sunday, October 31, the weekend shift was treated to pizza.





Last but not least, we held a costume contest! Employees were able to vote based on four categories the week following Halloween. The categories were: funniest, scariest, most creative, and favorite. The winners are listed below. Check out all of the costumes on the next two pages!



COSTUME CONTEST



RESULTS

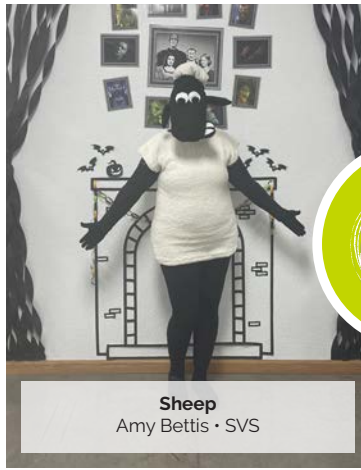
 <p>FUNNIEST</p> <p>Jack Przywojski "Jack In A Box"</p>	 <p>SCARIEST</p> <p>Ana Mueller & Brittany Clements "Graveyard Shift"</p>	 <p>MOST CREATIVE</p> <p>Britney Henkel "Potty Pants"</p>	 <p>FAVORITE</p> <p>Jeff Gierok "Homeless Jeff"</p>
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Nathan Explosion (Metalocalypse)
Alyson Olson • Auto Emp



Cat
Amber Williams • Ink



Sheep
Amy Bettis • SVS



Graveyard Shift
Ana Mueller & Brittany Clements
SVS & LVS



Dean Winchester (Supernatural)
Daniel Puent • Screenmaking



Inmate
Ellen Monhaut • Art



Hockey Player
Jennifer Schloesser • Art



Scarecrow
Jennifer Jahnke • Auto Emp



Phantom Wolf
Jordan Witt • SVS



Amie & Spooky-San
Amie Miller & Megan Dickerson-Caacbay
SVS & LVS



Kratos
Raven Erickson • LVS



Unicorn
Sierra Craig • Auto Emp



Highlighter
Amy Otteson • LVS



Carole Baskin
Annie Anderson • Art



Potty Pants
Britney Henkel • SVS



Jack-In-A-Box
Jack Przywojski • Art



Copy Cat
Jamie Sanders • HR



Homeless Jeff
Jeff Gierok • Electrical Technician



Kid
Kimberly Kazianka • Engineering



Cat
Mary Parris • LVS



Levi
Megan Hickerson • SVS

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2021 costume contest!

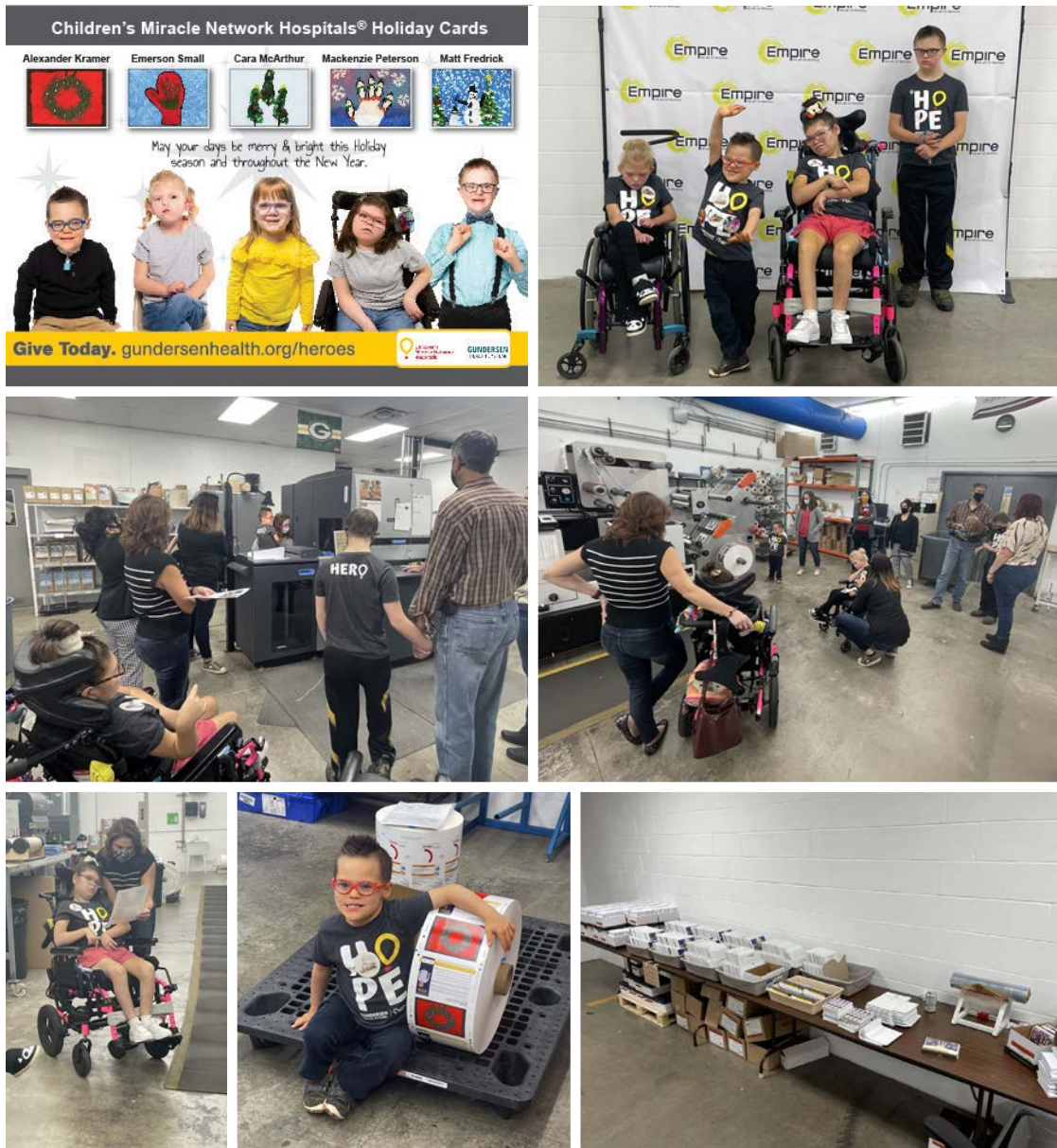


HELPING HANDS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Each year, Jim Brush, owner of Empire Screen Printing, and his wife Cindy give away \$250 to ten Empire employees who have been met with hardships. The recipients of the \$250 are nominated by fellow employees or themselves. Nominations are reviewed by upper management, and the gifts are handed out anonymously. This is the seventh year of Jim and Cindy's Helping Hands for the Holidays.

CMN HOLIDAY CARDS BY: ELLEN MONHAUT

For years, Empire has worked with Gundersen's Children's Miracle Network by taking artwork created by the heroes and transforming them into holiday cards. Each year, the heroes and their families are invited to tour Empire and see their cards being printed. However, due to the global pandemic last year, we were unable to invite the heroes to our facility. In fact, there pandemic halted most of the activities that the heroes would normally get to participate in. Now, Gundersen has decided to honor these heroes for a second year in a row, and in 2021, the heroes and their families were able to visit Empire and see their cards print!



EMPIRE HOLIDAY PARTY

On December 16-17, Empire hosted a holiday party for all employees on all shifts. Employees were encouraged to wear their favorite holiday sweaters, a meal was catered by Blue Moon Restaurant, and a variety of prizes were available. Prizes were randomly selected for each employee. Those who did not win were given \$20 cash. Check out pictures from the event and the list of all the prize winners.





Shelia Albers • Air Fryer
 Desiree Mierow • Smart Clock Bundle
 Fred Baures • \$50 Cash
 Nick Wolfe • Robotic Vacuum
 Chris Rogowski • Cheese Board Set
 Steve Nelson • Air Fryer
 Dustin Maule • \$50 Cash
 Mariah Mittelsteadt • 42" TV
 Kathy Vaughan • Digital Clock
 Kiecila Fruetel • Air Fryer
 Evelyn Mihalovic • \$50 Cash
 Daniel Clauson • Hart Wet/Dry Vac
 Annie Anderson • Air Fryer
 Brittany Clements • \$100 Cash
 Brittany Cairns • Smart Clock Bundle
 Marcia McFarlane • Air Fryer
 Eric Coleman • 22" Presto Slimline Griddle
 Ian Larson • \$50 Cash
 Heather Reinsvold • Air Fryer
 Joshua Parnow • Bluetooth Shower Speaker
 Jenny Ledman • \$50 Cash
 Rhonda Peterson • Keurig K-Express
 Sherri Vinson • Air Fryer
 Dawn McGrath • 42" TV
 Megan Hickerson \$50 Cash
 Jennifer Schloesser • Wireless Earbuds
 Charles Hills • \$100 Cash
 Lisa Lehrke • Table Top Griddle

Jacky Vue • Air Fryer
 Tyler Allen • Smart Clock Bundle
 Rebecca Wurzel • \$50 Cash
 Jordan Bott • Mini Projector
 Jeff Meyer • 42" TV
 Alex Bollom • Air Fryer
 Eric Wienkes • Pizza Oven
 Emily Syring • \$50 Cash
 Jory Stall • Air Fryer
 Carina Olson • Digital Air Fryer
 Brian Subjek • \$50 Cash
 Tyler Jensen • Air Fryer
 Randy Hoff • \$100 Cash
 Lisa Massoth • 50" TV
 Justin Pfaff • \$50 Cash
 Bill Feyen • Air Fryer
 Lisa Slonka • Smart Clock Bundle
 Traci Low • Outdoor Gas Fire Pit
 Jared Papenfuss • Air Fryer
 Mai Khang • 42" TV
 Megan Dickerson-Caacbay • Air Fryer
 Jennifer Janke • 28" Griddle Cooking Station
 Sam Sokolik • Patio Heater
 Rick Auterson • Nintendo Switch
 Evan Heintz • Digital Smoker
 Cody Volden • \$100 Cash
 Raven Erickson • FUJIFILM Instax Camera Set
 Troy Siverhus • 55" TV

RETIREMENT

On Wednesday, December 15, we celebrated the retirement of Ava Grimslid after 36 years of working at Empire Screen Printing. Empire provided a catered meal from Festival Foods. Jim Brush (Owner), John Freismuth (President), and Jim Schweinfus (Vice President) all took turns saying kind words and well wishes to Ava on her next step.



NEW EMPLOYEES

Logan Brown
 Anita Valley
 Joshua Parnow
 Sierra Craig
 Tyler Jensen
 Bronson Tamke
 Andrew Anderson
 Alex Bollom
 Nathan Belisle
 Daniel Clauson
 Erin Renwick

Danielle Helke
 Deborah Felix
 September Gross
 Mariah Mittelsteadt
 Heather Heberlein
 Sharpray Madison
 Chris Rogowski
 Dalton Johnson
 Anthony Wright
 Jennifer Jahnke
 Amanda Heller

Shane Palen
 Justin Pfaff
 Jonathan Valley
 Dereck Merritt
 Jack Przywojski
 Kimberly Gratz
 David Benzschawel
 Aaron Jurjens
 Lucille Brenegen
 Jessica Shafer
 Jade Grekoff



EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

AUGUST

Sue Maule.....38 years
 Angie Burnett.....38 years
 Mike Smith.....34 years
 Steve Johnson.....31 years
 Lee Vieth.....30 years
 Jeff Meyer.....30 years
 Trish Lastofka.....22 years
 Steve Lechnir.....22 years
 Doug Kuehn.....16 years
 Levi Adank.....16 years
 Ellen Monhaut.....9 years
 Ava Grimslid.....9 years
 Troy Siverhus.....7 years
 Mary Parris.....7 years
 Rebecca Bridges.....4 years
 Rhonda Knobloch.....3 years
 Amber Williams.....3 years
 Jacob Hulburt.....1 year
 Ian Larson.....1 year
 Casey Wilkins.....1 year
 Brittany Clements.....1 year
 Hannah Eddy.....1 year
 Travis Watkins.....1 year

SEPTEMBER

Jim Brush.....61 years
 Steve Stenberg.....43 years
 Dee Norling.....30 years
 Nancy Gilbertson.....24 years
 Mike Rowlands.....17 years
 Kim Page.....14 years
 Jared Papenfuss.....9 years

Brock Eckert.....4 years
 Ginger Anderson.....4 years
 David Johnston.....4 years
 Joe Piper.....4 years
 Jordan Pochanayon.....1 year

OCTOBER

Lisa Slonka.....36 years
 Eileen Ustby.....27 years
 Cathy Buttell.....26 years
 Laurie Arentz.....16 years
 Charles Hills.....15 years
 Benjamin Bakken.....11 years
 Dawn Kehr.....7 years
 Traci Low.....7 years
 Troy Hanson.....6 years
 Amelia Otteson.....4 years
 Robert Bialecki.....3 years
 Liam Murphy.....3 years
 Tyler Allen.....1 year
 Jamie Sanders.....1 year

NOVEMBER

Jim Weber.....36 years
 Keith Cook.....30 years
 Roman Kamrowski.....27 years
 Dawn McGrath.....27 years
 Marcia Macfarlane.....24 years
 Candy Amann.....21 years
 Theresa Antony.....17 years
 Jon Schubert.....15 years
 Kevin Gerstenberger.....15 years
 Christine Kendhammer.....14 years

Rick Auterson.....13 years
 Bonnie Anderson.....12 years
 Dustin Maule.....9 years
 Jason Koopman.....7 years
 Todd LeJeune.....6 years
 Francis Schmitz.....4 years
 Ana Mueller.....4 years
 Dawn Bentzen.....3 years
 Annie Anderson.....3 years
 Mike Wakeen.....2 years
 Karl Schultz.....1 year
 Christopher Wangen.....1 year
 Melisa White-Perren.....1 year

DECEMBER

John Johnson.....36 years
 Kathy Vaughan.....33 years
 Dave Collins.....27 years
 Steve Johnson.....26 years
 Rita Howe.....25 years
 Steve Vinson.....22 years
 Eric Coleman.....17 years
 Shane Tuma.....1 year

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Congratulations to Brad Cook (LVS) and Jordan Bott (formerly screenmaking) on the birth of their son, Asher Rowan Cook. He was born November 3, 2021. 7lbs. 8 oz., 21".

Deadline for the next
 newsletter: 03/25/2022



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