

LITCHFIELD

Independent Review

\$1.50 ON NEWSSTANDS
PUBLISHED SINCE 1876

SHOOTING FOR A BIG FINISH

Dragons seniors focus
on time drops for section / 12



SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

High school, middle school
recognize achievement / 9

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023



Litchfield players surround coach Jim Jackman and raise their helmets and fingers in celebration of a good season following the Dragons' loss to Dassel-Cokato in the Section 2AAA championship game Friday.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BRENT SCHACHERER

A BITTER END TO A MEMORABLE SEASON

It was the kind of game most expected. But a result none of those wearing green and black wanted.

The Litchfield football team's season came to a crushing end with a 27-20 loss to Dassel-Cokato in the Section 2AAA championship game Friday at Buffalo High School.

The Dragons, seeded No. 1 in the section, and Dassel-Cokato, the No. 2 seed, provided the kind of close, hard-hitting, solid football game that one might have thought. Like their previous meeting during the regular season, the outcome came down to a final drive by the trailing team.

This time, it was the Dragons trying to rally. And this time, it was Litchfield that came up just short, a fourth-down run stopped shy of the first down with just over a minute to play in a game that had gone back and forth all night.

Dassel-Cokato will go on to the state playoffs. Litchfield's season, one of the most successful in recent history, ends with an 8-2 record.

See story and additional photos on Page 12.



Litchfield players console each other following the team's 27-20 loss to Dassel-Cokato in the Section 2AAA championship game Friday at Buffalo.

Answering the call to serve

Veterans organizations look to bolster ranks so their community efforts can continue

BY MARY-ANNE OLMSTED-KOHL
For Crow River Media

American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars organizations have posts all over the nation — including Hutchinson and Litchfield. Many face a membership dilemma as World War II veterans die and fewer younger veterans actively join these organizations.

The American Legion was established by Congress in 1919 to help veterans, service members and communities. Both Hutchinson Post 96 and Litchfield Post 104 chapters were chartered in 1920. Litchfield's post name honors a pair of fallen from World War I — Orville Nelsan and Donald Horton.

In 1899, veterans of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection founded local organizations to provide rights and benefits for service. These local organizations grouped together and formed the VFW. Unlike the American Legion, which accepts veterans of the U.S. military no matter where they served, the VFW only accepts those who served overseas in a combat zone or received hostile fire pay.

Veterans to 5 ➤



Litchfield American Legion Post members stand during the Pledge of Allegiance before a recent post meeting.

A career built on solid foundation

HOF inductee Josh Fenton appreciates hometown's impact on his life

BY BRENT SCHACHERER
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Growing up and attending school in Litchfield gave Josh Fenton advantages he didn't really think about until after he left his hometown.

"At the time, and shortly thereafter, I didn't really have any different perspective," Fenton said. "I just thought, naively, that this is what everybody's community and school experience was. But there's no doubt that (growing up here) prepared me for what was coming next."

What came next was a lot, not the least of which is his current job as commissioner of The Summit League, an NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletic conference.

There have been plenty of other impressive entries on the 1997 Litchfield High School graduate's resume, including nine years as commissioner of the National Collegiate Hockey Conference and several years as senior associate athletic director for finance and administration at Miami (Ohio) University.

The culmination of the duties, as well as other personal and professional highlights, will bring Fenton back home Friday when he will be inducted, along with two others, into the Litchfield High School Hall of Fame.

"I think, for me, two words come to mind," Fenton said when asked to describe his reaction to his Hall of Fame nomination. "I'm certainly honored and very humbled by the recognition. Litchfield High School has produced many, many great citizens across our country, and I guess to be honored in some distinctive way ... I'm honored and very humbled."

Though "college conference commissioner" was not something on his list of career objectives when he was attending LHS, the experiences he gained in the classroom — and athletic fields — in Litchfield certainly set the stage for it, he said. Those experiences extend far beyond the professional tract and into his personal life, as well.

Fenton to 8 ➤

Litchfield graduate to TV producer

BY KENDALL LARSON
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The world of filmmaking, action shots and famous directors seems a far-off place from small town Litchfield, but one man made it his goal to live that life. A goal he will share with Litchfield High School students this week when he is inducted into the school's Hall of Fame.

Andrew Zilch, a Litchfield High School graduate, made his life out in California as a television producer and film screenwriter. He has worked on many shows and studios in his line of work, even getting to work under award-winning director Steven Spielberg.

It all started in Litchfield. "The fondest memories I have of Litchfield High School were the connections I made with people," Zilch said. "Not just friends, but some influential teachers as well. I have a lot of fond memories of my time making music. I was a trumpet player in all the bands and participated in the marching band and marching band tours. That was all very memorable."

Zilch to 5 ➤