

NEWS AND PROFILES CONNECTING THE LATINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

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2026

¡PRÓSPERO AÑO NUEVO!

HAPPY
New Year!

APOYEMOS A LOS NEGOCIOS LATINOS



Saint Paul Winter Carnival 2026! 140th Anniversary Celebration!

The 2026 Saint Paul Winter Carnival will run from **Thursday, January 22, 2026, to Sunday, February 1, 2026**. Most events are free, family-friendly, and open to the public, taking place across various venues in Saint Paul, including Rice Park and the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. A schedule of some key events is below:

Ice & Snow Events

- **Ice Park: January 22-February 1, 2026, at Rice Park.** Features an ice bar, laser light show, and ice carving competition sculptures.
- **Vulcan Snow Park at the Fair: January 22-February 1, 2026, at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds.** Features large snow sculptures crafted by local artists.
- **Ice Castles:** A separate ice sculpture exhibition is also available for viewing, with tickets available for dates including **Friday, January 23, 2026 and Saturday, January 24, 2026, at the Minnesota State Fair.**

Parades & Community Events

- **King Boreas' Grande Day Parade: Saturday, January 24, 2026,** starting on **Grand Avenue** (from Dale to Lexington Avenues).
- **Vulcan Torchlight Victory Parade and Fireworks Show: Saturday, January 31, 2026,** proceeding from West Seventh Street to Rice Park, culminating in the Vulcan Overthrow and a fireworks display.
- **Frozen Family Fun Night: Tuesday, January 27, 2026,** at the **Landmark Center.** Features character meet-and-greets, story time, a sing-along, and themed activities.



El Carnaval de Invierno de Saint Paul 2026 se llevará a cabo desde **el jueves 22 de enero hasta el domingo 1 de febrero de 2026**. La mayoría de los eventos son gratuitos, aptos para familias y abiertos al público, realizándose en diversos lugares de Saint Paul, incluyendo Rice Park y el Recinto Ferial del Estado de Minnesota (Minnesota State Fairgrounds). A continuación se presenta un programa de algunos eventos clave:

Eventos de Hielo y Nieve

- **Ice Park:** Del 22 de enero al 1 de febrero de 2026 en Rice Park. Incluye un bar de hielo, un espectáculo de luces láser y esculturas del concurso de tallado de hielo.
- **Vulcan Snow Park en la Feria:** Del 22 de enero al 1 de febrero de 2026 en el Recinto Ferial del Estado de Minnesota. Presenta grandes esculturas de nieve creadas por artistas locales.
- **Ice Castles (Castillos de Hielo):** Una exhibición de esculturas de hielo independiente también estará disponible; las entradas están a la venta para fechas que incluyen el viernes 23 y el sábado 24 de enero de 2026 en la Feria Estatal de Minnesota.

Desfiles y Eventos Comunitarios

- **Gran Desfile del Rey Boreas (King Boreas' Grande Day Parade):** Sábado 24 de enero de 2026, comenzando en Grand Avenue (desde la avenida Dale hasta Lexington).
- **Desfile de la Victoria de las Antorchas de los Vulcanos y Espectáculo de Fuegos Artificiales:** Sábado 31 de enero de 2026, recorriendo desde West Seventh Street hasta Rice Park, culminando con el "Derrocamiento Vulcano" (Vulcan Overthrow) y un espectáculo de pirotecnia.
- **Noche de Diversión Familiar "Frozen":** Martes 27 de enero de 2026 en el Landmark Center. Incluye encuentros con personajes, hora del cuento, canciones para cantar a coro y actividades temáticas.



On The Cover

¡2026 Prospero Año Nuevo!

Happy New Year!

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2026: Un Año para Vivir con Amor Fe y Esperanza



Por Pastor Saúl Carranza

Cuando sinceramente decimos a los que nos rodean “feliz año nuevo” estamos poniendo en esas palabras nuestros mejores deseos y oraciones para que esa persona reciba las bendiciones de Dios y que en ese nuevo año tenga vida, salud, paz felicidad y todas esas cosas importantes que él dinero no puede comprar pero que todos anhelamos tener.

El nuevo año nos da la oportunidad de renovar nuestra visión, replantear metas y fortalecer nuestros valores.

Aunque hay grandes problemas y grandes retos 2026 se presenta como un año cargado de promesas, desafíos y posibilidades, donde la fe el amor y la esperanza se convierten en la base para enfrentar cualquier circunstancia. En tiempos de incertidumbre y cambios, cultivar estos valores puede ser la clave para encontrar sentido y dirección en nuestro camino.

Tener fe significa confiar en que, a pesar de las dificultades, existen razones para seguir adelante. La fe no sólo está ligada a nuestra relación con Dios, sino que también se manifiesta en la confianza hacia uno mismo, hacia los seres queridos y en la convicción de que el esfuerzo y la perseverancia pueden transformar la realidad. En 2026, permitámonos fortalecer nuestra fe, creyendo en nuestras capacidades para crear un

mundo mejor y que en ello contamos con la bendición del divino Creador y el amor del Padre celestial.

La esperanza es esa chispa que nos anima a mirar hacia el futuro con optimismo. Nos ayuda a superar obstáculos y a soñar con días mejores. En este año nuevo, la esperanza puede ser el punto de partida para reinventarnos, para abrir el corazón a nuevas oportunidades y para mantener la motivación en medio de los retos cotidianos. Mantener viva la esperanza es esencial para no dejarse vencer por la adversidad, recordar que siempre hay un motivo para sonreír y luchar por lo que creemos.

2026 es una página en blanco, lista para ser escrita con historias de superación, crecimiento y renovación. Vivir con fe y esperanza no significa ignorar la realidad, sino enfrentarla con una actitud positiva y resiliente. Los valores cristianos son fe, esperanza y amor. Ellos son el punto de partida para que en el nuevo año podamos esperar y a construir juntos un futuro más esperanzador, feliz y pleno.

“Amado, yo deseo que tú seas prosperado en todas las cosas, y que tengas salud, así como prospera tu alma.” **3Jn 2**

Feliz año nuevo.

2026: A Year to Live with Faith and Hope

By Pastor Saul Carranza

When we sincerely say “Happy New Year” to those around us, we are giving our best wishes and prayers into those words, hoping that person will receive God’s blessings and that in the new year they will have life, health, peace, happiness, and all those important things that money cannot buy but that we all long to have.

The new year gives us the opportunity to renew our vision, rethink our goals, and strengthen our convictions. Although now there are major problems and great challenges, 2026 seems set to be a year full of promises, challenges, and possibilities, where faith, love, and hope become the foundation for facing any circumstance. In times of uncertainty and change, cultivating these values can be the key to finding meaning and direction on our path.

Having faith means trusting that, despite difficulties, there are reasons to keep going. Faith is not only linked to our relationship with God, but also manifests itself in trust in oneself, in loved ones, and in the conviction that effort and perseverance can transform reality. In 2026, let us strengthen our faith, believing in our abilities to create a better world and that in doing so we have the blessing of the divine Creator and the love of our heavenly Father.

Hope is that spark that encourages us to look to the future with optimism. It helps us overcome obstacles and dream of better days. In this new year, hope can be the starting point for reinventing ourselves, opening our hearts to new opportunities, and staying motivated amid everyday challenges. Keeping hope alive is essential to not letting adversity defeat us, to remembering that there is always a reason to smile and fight for what we believe in.

2026 is a blank page, ready to be written with stories of overcoming adversity, growth, and renewal. Living with faith and hope does not mean ignoring reality but facing it with a positive and resilient attitude. Christian values are faith, hope, and love. They are the starting point for us to hope and build together a more hopeful, happy, and fulfilling future in the new year.

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.” **3 John 2 NIV**

Happy New Year

IGLESIA CRISTIANA FAMILIA DE DIOS

SERVICIO DE ADORACIÓN

TODOS LOS DOMINGOS 1:00PM

Ministerio de MUJERES

Hijas del Rey

2º sábado de cada mes

DESAYUNO 9:00 AM

Ministerio de VARONES

LOS CUATES

Reunión especial el 2º sábado de cada mes

Transmitidos por

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763 245 2378 14100 Elm creek Road, Dayton, MN, 553669, US

VEN ADOREMOS EN FAMILIA

VIERNES

Estudio bíblico, grupo de oración y testimonio. Grupo discipulado.

7:00PM

SABADO

Servicio de Damas. -cada segundo sábado del mes.

9:00AM

Ministerio de hombres "Los cuates" Reunión mensual.

DOMINGO

Servicio de adoración Clases bíblicas para adolescentes y niños.

1:00PM

En Dayton

Peromuy cercade Maple Grove, Champlin, Osseo Rogers y Brooklyn Park.

Facebook.com/iglesiafamiliadeDios.DaytonMN

Another Year Flew By...Happy New Year!



Marcia Malzahn

By Marcia Malzahn

Do you find yourself saying lately, “another year flew by”? The New Year is always a time for reflection for me. I take account of everything I was able to accomplish and also what I didn’t get done. Another year, I couldn’t do this or that project. As soon as I feel the sense of accomplishment, I suddenly feel I didn’t do enough.

We live in a time where there is so much to do both at the personal level and in the workplace. There is simply not enough time. Companies expect increased efficiency from all employees

and the ability to assimilate immense amounts of information in a short time. Competition is furious at every level in business. How do you stay competitive? What additional training can you get to stay marketable? What must one do to be successful in today’s work environment?

Below are five strategies you can implement at home and at work to help you maximize your time in the New Year:

Strategically prioritize activities.

Because you most likely cannot attend everything you’re invited to (or obligated to attend), you must prioritize. When prioritizing events and activities, always choose the activities that will make the most impact in someone’s life. Whether the event is personal with family or at work, measure the impact your presence will have if you attend. And what message will your absence project to others if you did not attend the event?

Understanding that if you are in leadership at your workplace, the expectation of you attending all-employee events is greater. However, there may be client or community events where someone else could represent the organization well. This is a way of sharing the opportunity to participate in special events with others and is perceived positively.

Choose to travel or attend meetings virtually carefully.

The one positive outcome I find from the 2020 Pandemic is that virtual meetings became acceptable. However, as “business as usual” returned, many companies expect employees to attend meetings in person again. Even organizations who allow hybrid or remote employees encourage them to participate in person at least periodically. Despite claims that remote teams function well, working together in person still offers many benefits.

So, how do you decide when to attend in person versus virtually? You must choose carefully based on the situation and the type of meeting. If you’re in sales, meeting clients in person is still the best approach. After the initial meeting it is easier and acceptable to continue meeting virtually to conduct business. On the other hand, if you are meeting with a vendor, you could choose to have the initial meeting virtually. If the relationship continues then it may make sense to meet your provider in person later. Although from the vendor’s perspective, they will insist on meeting you in person. The two main reasons to meet virtually are the savings from the travel expense and your time, which is invaluable.

Prioritize projects at home based on urgency.

If you own your home, then you know the never-ending list of things to repair, install, buy, and maintain. But how do you prioritize what to do first? Focus on the urgency of the issue at hand. If the dish washer or cloth dryer breaks, you may need to buy one right away. I’m blessed to have a super handy husband who keeps an ongoing list of things to maintain for “our estate.” But what if you are not handy

nor have anyone around to help you? You then need to outsource all the projects that you can’t do and budget for them in advance. It is wise to have a “house maintenance budget” where you put money aside in savings monthly.

For other types of projects that don’t involve maintenance or repairs, choose based on what brings you joy and peace. Sometimes cleaning a closet or emptying boxes of old things you don’t know why you still keep them, is refreshing.

Take time to train yourself and learn new things – especially AI!

The use of Artificial Intelligence is growing at an exponential pace, and businesses are integrating it into all jobs. The key to AI is not to create it but to learn to use it wisely and effectively. Most companies have adopted an AI Policy by now. These policies describe acceptable use cases and boundaries to avoid prohibited use such as sharing customer personal identifiable information (PII). Make it your mission to learn how to use AI in your own job. Learn the prompts and keep a history of questions you used so you can repeat them in the future. As you learn to use AI appropriately, you gain efficiency in your work and get more done in less time. That is the key! This is how you stay marketable and keep up with the competition in the marketplace.

Allocate time for family and friendships.

As mentioned above, prioritize your time based on the impact you will have on someone’s life. If you have children, they must be your priority, always. It is only for a season in your life as they quickly grow up and leave home. Be present in their lives, attend their important events, and spend quality time with them. Create special memories with your spouse, significant other, your children, and your extended family. It is so easy to let relationships fade away for lack of time to nourish them. Be intentional to allocate time for your loved ones, regardless of what projects didn’t get done after you say, “another year flew by.”

Conclusion

Everything in life that we consider to be important needs our attention and focus. Therefore, we must choose carefully and strategically which activities to participate in and how. Also, we must be intentional about who to spend time with and how to allocate time for our loved ones. I hope these strategies help you prioritize as you begin the journey of the New Year! I encourage you to reflect on what you accomplished last year but give yourself grace for the things you couldn’t do. Maybe better questions to ask yourself are, “How many people did I impact last year?” “How did I help others last year?” and “Who can I help this year?”

Happy New Year!



Marcia is an inspirational keynote speaker and published author of five books: A daily devotional – *Devotions for Working Women*, *The Fire Within* – to help you find your purpose, friendship poems in *The Friendship Book*, also in Spanish *El Libro de la Amistad* (poemas de Amistad), and *Bring YOUR Shoes* to help emerging leaders with tools on how to lead. In her latest grandma baby book, *Inside Your Mama’s Tummy*, Marcia inspires grandparents to form a bond with their grandchildren.

Marcia Malzahn is also president and founder of Malzahn Strategic, LLC a management consulting firm for community financial institutions. You can contact Marcia for speaking engagements through her website at [Crowning Achievements International](http://CrowningAchievementsInternational.com) or email her at mmalzahn@crowning-achievements.com.



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APOYEMOS A LOS NEGOCIOS LATINOS



¿QUÉ ES IMPORTANTE PARA USTED?

¿AMIGOS? ¿FAMILIA?
¿EDUCACIÓN?

Sí la familia y los estudios son una prioridad para usted, en la Guardia Nacional de Minnesota usted puede servir a la comunidad y al país desde aquí, cerca de su familia y amigos.

Es más, usted puede servir mientras estudia tiempo completo y obtener colegiatura gratuita.



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25

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Cambios federales a Medicaid: tu guía oficial para entenderlos

Por Rico Paul Vallejos

Tal vez oíste sobre los cambios federales que se vienen en Medicaid, un programa de seguro médico que se llama **Asistencia Médica** en Minnesota. Nada cambiará hasta octubre de 2026. Pero vale la pena mantenerse al día. En esta página web tienes datos reales y al día sobre tu cobertura de Asistencia Médica: mn.gov/dhs/federalchanges-es.

Te recomiendo que consultes esa página web regularmente para ver qué nuevos cambios podría haber. En este artículo te ofrezco un breve resumen de los cambios al día de hoy.

Los cambios que se vienen no afectan a muchas personas que:

- tienen cobertura basada en una discapacidad,
- tienen 65 años o más,
- tienen 20 años o menos,
- están embarazadas.

Pero consulta la página para ver qué cambios te podrían afectar.

La página incluye explicaciones claras y detalles actualizados sobre tu cobertura médica.

Los cambios:

- **En el otoño de 2026**, a partir del 1° de octubre, hay algunos cambios en elegibilidad para ciertos inmigrantes.
- **El año que viene**, a partir del 1° de enero de 2027, los cambios incluyen ciertos requerimientos de trabajo para muchos adultos de entre 21 y 64 años, que también tendrán renovaciones más frecuentes. Además, la cobertura retroactiva tendrá ciertos límites.

¿Qué hago?

Simplemente mantente al día revisando esta **página de cambios**

federales regularmente (mn.gov/dhs/federalchanges-es o **escanea el código QR**)

para ver qué hay de nuevo. Asegúrate de mantener tus datos al día, y cuando sea hora de renovar recibirás por correo un formulario en un sobre con un círculo azul, que debes completar inmediatamente.

En la **página de cambios federales** tienes el enlace para ver los detalles de tu cobertura médica.



Este mensaje cuenta con el apoyo del Departamento de Servicios Humanos de Minnesota.



TU VOCACIÓN PUEDE CAMBIAR VIDAS.



careerforce.mn.gov/es/CaringCareer

m DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Cambios federales a Medicaid.



Tu guía oficial para entender cambios a tu Asistencia Médica:

mn.gov/dhs/federalchanges-es

O bien escanea este código:



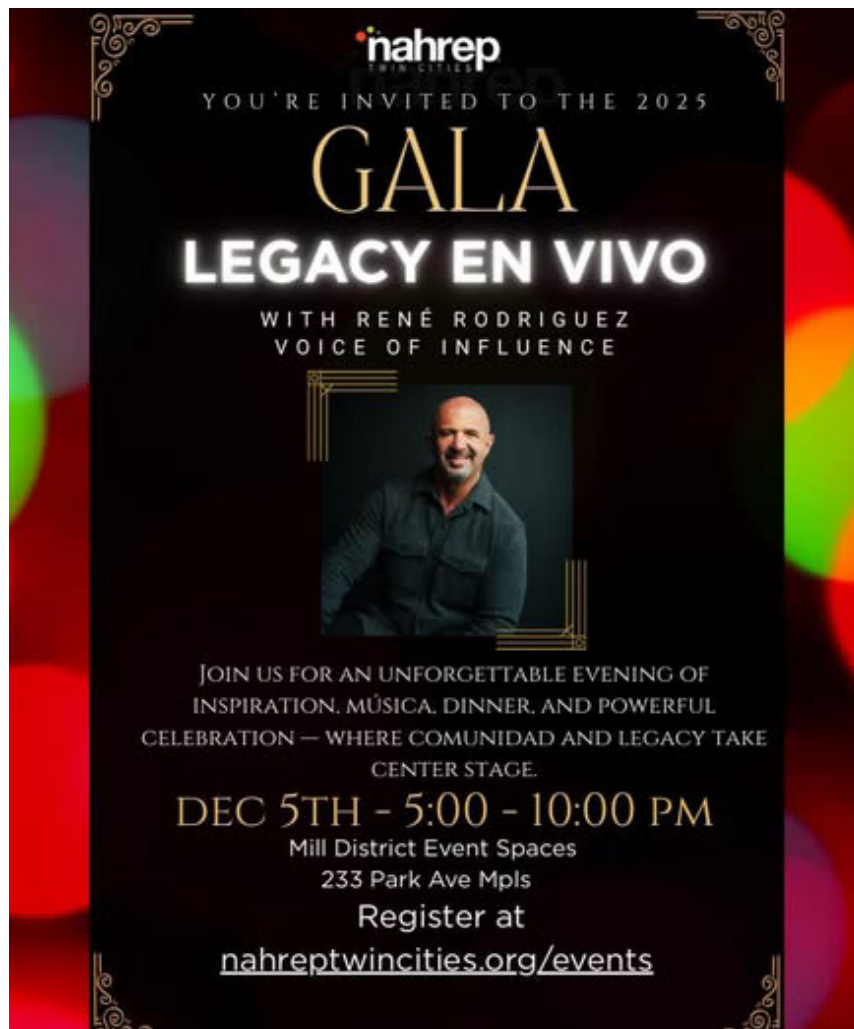
m DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

NAHREP Twin Cities 2025 GALA

Congratulations to NAHREP Twin Cities 2026 President and Board of Directors, led by Estefania Borns, President (L). The 2025 Gala was held in Minneapolis and featured Guest Speaker, Rene Rodriguez, who treated the over 200 guests to his inspirational and powerful remarks about Legacy and Leadership! We look forward to a successful 2026 and wish all a very Happy New Years!



Rene Rodriguez was the 2025 NAHREP Guest Speaker



NAHREP Twin Cities 2026 President and Board of Directors

Lilly Zepeda – Life Filled with Love, Laughter & Adventure



Lilly (Zepeda) Dittel passed peacefully into the arms of her Lord, surrounded by love. Born to Antonio and Petra Zepeda (both deceased), Lilly grew up in a large, close-knit family and carried her family's warmth, humor, and generosity into every stage of her life.

Lilly was formerly married to the late Robert Jack Dittel. She is survived by their children – Robert Anthony Dittel (Kelley), Kimberly Marie Dittel (Brian Nystrom).

She is also survived by her dear brother Edward Zepeda (Evelyn) and her loving sisters Minnie and Rebecca.

She would jokingly send her 7 year old son & 6 year old daughter to school saying “Good Riddance” as we thought it was a formal way of saying goodbye as she saw us off to school

Lil She was renowned for her amazing tacos – though she would proudly admit that Uncle Louie Trejo made the best enchiladas.

Lilly enjoyed fishing and was a proud member of a women's fishing club. She was also a traveler at heart, visiting many beautiful places across the Americas and beyond – including Greece, where she visited while her son was stationed there following the Gulf War. She often said she had at least 12 marriage proposals – a testament to the joy and beauty she carried through life.

Warm, witty, caring, and strong – Lilly truly lived life to the fullest. RIP Vaya con Dios!



Trade Schools offer a pathway to well-paying jobs with practical skills

Los latinos deberían trabajar más en el sector de los oficios, como la construcción, la carpintería, la fontanería, la electricidad y la calefacción, ventilación y aire acondicionado (HVAC). Ofrece una vía de acceso a empleos bien remunerados y con gran demanda, especialmente en el sector de la construcción, donde ya están muy representados, y puede ayudar a abordar la creciente escasez de mano de obra cualificada, al tiempo que ofrece oportunidades de promoción profesional y estabilidad económica.

Puntos clave:

- Gran demanda de trabajadores cualificados**
 El sector de la construcción, uno de los principales empleadores de trabajadores latinos, se enfrenta actualmente a una importante escasez de mano de obra cualificada, lo que lo convierte en un área primordial para aumentar la participación latina.
- Oportunidades económicas:**
 Los empleos en oficios suelen ofrecer salarios y beneficios competitivos, lo que supone una fuente de ingresos estable para los trabajadores latinos.
- Diversas trayectorias profesionales:**
 Los oficios abarcan una amplia gama de especialidades como carpintería, fontanería, electricidad y calefacción, ventilación y aire acondicionado, lo que permite la progresión profesional y la especialización.
- Impacto en la comunidad:**
 Una mayor presencia latina en los oficios puede beneficiar a las comunidades locales al crear una mano de obra más diversa y apoyar los proyectos de construcción locales.

Retos a superar:

- Barreras lingüísticas:**
 El idioma puede ser un obstáculo importante para los trabajadores latinos que se incorporan a los oficios, lo que requiere acceso a formación y apoyo bilingües.

The statement “More Hispanics should go to trade schools” is supported by the argument that trade schools offer a pathway to well-paying jobs with practical skills, which can be particularly beneficial for Hispanic communities due to factors like potential financial constraints, a focus on immediate career opportunities, and a high demand for skilled labor in certain trades; however, it’s important to consider individual career goals and ensure access to quality trade school programs for all demographics.

Key points supporting this argument:

- High-demand, good-paying jobs:**
 Many trade careers offer stable employment with competitive wages without requiring a four-year college degree, which can be particularly appealing to individuals facing financial barriers.
- Hands-on learning:**
 Trade schools provide practical, hands-on training that can be beneficial for learners who prefer a more active learning style.
- Faster career entry:**
 Trade school programs often have shorter durations compared to traditional college degrees, allowing individuals to enter the workforce sooner.
- Community needs:**
 Certain industries like construction, plumbing, and electrician work are in high demand in many communities and could benefit from a larger pool of skilled Hispanic workers.

Important considerations:

- Access and awareness:**
 Efforts should be made to ensure Hispanic communities have access to quality trade school programs and are informed about the potential career paths available.
- Career counseling:**
 Guidance is crucial to help individuals choose trade paths that align with their interests and local job market needs.
- Addressing stereotypes:**
 Combatting negative stereotypes associated with trade work can encourage more Hispanic students to consider these pathways.

Resale is Where Sustainability Meets Style, Where Affordability Meets Dignity, Where Commerce Meets Community

By Krystell Theisen Escobar, Founder,
Eco Chico Kid's Resale & Soul aWear Circular Fashion
info@ecochicoresale.com



Resale is having its main-character moment, outpacing retail by 3X in the US and 4X or more globally and Minnesota – ever the pragmatic, quietly stylish innovator – is leading the charge.

The shift isn't a whisper anymore; it's a cultural pivot and a collective decision to shop smarter, live lighter, and honor both our wallets and our world. From the in-vogue corners of France and

50th to the vintage vibes lining the W 7th/West Saint Paul corridor, resale has a strong foothold with shoppers of all ages, but has special meaning and appeal to up and coming Gen-Z shoppers who see it as a way of life.

And if anyone has a front-row seat to this evolution, it's Krystell Theisen Escobar, the visionary resale entrepreneur from rewriting the rules of modern retail from right here in the North Star State.

Krystell has spent years in the circular-fashion trenches, building beloved community boutiques like the celebrated Eco Chico Kid's Resale (opened in 2023) and her latest project for adults (coming in February 2026) Soul aWear Circular Fashion, shaping neighborhood economies, and watching how people actually move in the world – how they shop, prioritize, and dream. Her read on the moment is simple: resale isn't "the alternative" anymore. Resale is the new retail.

She says Minnesotans are leaning into reuse with gusto because it fits the soul of who we are. This couldn't be clearer as she joins as board members of the hyper-engaged and fast growing association, Reuse MN. "People here care about stewardship. We show up for the community. We stretch a dollar not out of scarcity, but out of generational wisdom. Reuse feels like Minnesota: grounded, intentional, and innovative."

And while national headlines praise the resale boom – projecting the secondhand market to outpace traditional retail growth by 11X – Krystell sees something more textured happening locally. She sees neighborhood moms swapping winter gear with pride instead of shame. She sees teens crafting entire aesthetics out of thrifted treasures. She sees young families turning to resale not just for affordability, but for identity. It's no longer a survival tactic from her immigrant roots, it's a sign that progress has been achieved and the modern traps of consumerism have been transcended. As she puts it, "Minnesotans don't just buy second hand. We believe in it."

Resale gives shoppers the thrill of discovery, the chance to dress with character rather than clone-culture sameness. It lets households reclaim financial breathing room. It redirects usable clothing out of landfills and back into circulation. And in a world where consumers crave meaning, resale delivers something traditional retail has lost: soul. Real stories. Real value. Real impact.

Krystell points out that many Minnesotans are no longer impressed by overproduction or high markups disguised as luxury. Instead, they want goods that live twice, maybe three times. They want quality with a conscience. They want to know their shopping dollars reinforce local businesses rather than global waste streams.

This trend has become especially powerful in Minnesota's diverse suburban corridors, where small resale boutiques and curated secondhand shops have blossomed into vibrant economic anchors. Families aren't just walking in to save money – they're walking in to participate in a movement.

"Resale is where sustainability meets style, where affordability meets dignity, where commerce meets community," Krystell says. "It's everything main street retail used to be."

Traditional retail will evolve and always have a seat at the table, but the center of gravity has shifted. Consumers today are savvy and well aware of the impact their choices make – not in the abstract, but in their neighborhoods, in their budgets, in the climate their children will inherit. Minnesotans are now enacting that awareness as a lifestyle choice. Reuse isn't a trend here. It's a compass.

As national attention continues to shine on the secondhand revolution, local entrepreneurs like Krystell Theisen Escobar are shaping what the future of retail looks like – more circular, more conscious, more human.

And in that future, resale isn't a sideline player.

It's the new retail. A retail with roots, values, and purpose – powered by a state that has always known the quiet strength of choosing better.



Eco Chico Kid's Resale and Soul aWear Circular Fashion are dedicated to promoting sustainable fashion and fostering a circular economy. By providing a curated marketplace for pre-owned clothing and accessories in West Saint Paul, MN, these innovative resale players empower consumers to make conscious choices and reduce their environmental impact.

A New Way To Embrace Winter: Stay Overnight At A Minnesota State Park!

By Deborah Locke, DNR Communications Specialist

Photos courtesy of Minnesota DNR

Want to meet winter halfway and have fun at the same time? Many state parks offer outdoor activities and overnight accommodations year-round.

This story will describe winter lodging accommodations at three state parks that have proximity to the metro: William O'Brien, Lake Maria and Afton state parks. For a listing of all Minnesota parks with information about activities, lodging, programs and equipment rental, go to mndnr.gov/parkfinder. Remember that parks differ with what they offer, so prepare before you leave home.

The parks listed above offer these lodging opportunities: campsites, camper cabins, and yurts (Afton State Park only). Camper cabins are rustic with two sets of bunk beds, a pull-out or futon double bed, and a small table with benches. Some have electricity and heat; others use a wood stove. Go online to see what is offered, and its proximity to a parking lot. Some camper cabins are a quarter mile to two miles from the parking area so you will hike in. As for restrooms, you'll be using an outdoor vault toilet in the winter.

William O'Brien State Park is the exception to hiking in as you can drive up to its three camper cabins. Additionally, the park has eight winter campsites with nearby vehicle parking. Cross-country skiers enjoy the park's 12-mile network of groomed trails; hikers enjoy the peaceful view of the St. Croix River. Wayne Boerner, park supervisor, said that some visitors skip the outdoor recreation altogether and stay warm inside, reading a book.

Lake Maria State Park offers the overnight park visitor more challenges, but some say it also offers more rewards. You'll walk farther to reach the park's non-electric, rustic camper cabins, said Kenny Giannini, park supervisor. Often visitors pull a sled or toboggan the half mile or mile to the cabin's front door. The three cabins are heated with a wood burning stove; wood is provided. There are 14 backpack-only campsites, requiring a three-quarter to two-mile hike. Ski trails are groomed once there's enough snow for a base.

Kenny said the park is secluded and rustic, and it's rare to find a secluded park close to the metro. "It's not for everyone, but for those who want peace and quiet, they love it," he said.

He stressed that it is important for visitors to understand what is meant by rustic camping. Remember this: You hike in, there is no electricity or running water, you'll use an outdoor toilet, and the cabins are heated with a wood stove.

DNR senior climatologist Kenny Blumenfeld is an annual visitor to Lake Maria State Park. He has stayed at the rustic camper cabins since 2020. "I love it that you can't just drive up to the cabin," he said. "Instead, you hike five to fifteen minutes to get in, and once in, you're on your own."

Kenny likes to leave behind the ease of home appliances and climate control for a sense of peace and solitude. When the park is windy, he hears rustling and groaning and popping sounds all over the forest. The spectacle of that "music" makes it easy to be away from home for a while, he said.

He often bikes into Monticello, and in the afternoon, returns to the cabin and hikes through the park. On occasion, Kenny will start a fire in the fire ring, and sit outside as evening settles in.

Yurts, larger canvas covered structures, are available to Afton State Park near Hastings. Nick Bartels, park supervisor, said that no electricity is available at the park's two yurts which are heated by a wood stove and sleep up to seven. Visitors need battery operated lanterns for light.

The park has four camper cabins with nearby parking. The park's 27 rustic backpack campsites are available year-round and require about a one-mile hike from the parking area. Afton State Park is popular for its 12 miles of groomed ski trails.

Generally, reservations for winter overnight lodging fill quickly on weekends. If you feel a need to try something new for a couple days, look no further than your nearest state park. Lean into winter, which has made a bold appearance this season.



Snowshoes at Afton state park



A camper cabin at Afton State Park



Fat tire biking at Lake Maria State Park



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