



August 30, 2026

Dear NATS Minnesota members!

The summer has been an active one for your Minnesota NATS board, as you will discover as you read through this letter. As we all roll into our fall schedules we would like to share with you the results of lots of hard work, adjustments, and decisions both exciting and perhaps challenging for our organization.

Please take a moment to read in detail the following:

- 1. Announcing a move for our auditions.** Due to college building transition work this fall at Bethel University, we need to move our auditions. Bethel has been so generous to us, but they requested that we would need to move our event to different days this year. Since we are rather locked in this year to these dates (NOVEMBER 6 and 7) We spent long hours working to find a suitable new accommodation that would serve our needs. We are delighted to announce that BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY will open their doors to us and welcome us to the northwoods. As we pondered this rather dramatic change we were reminded that a very large number of our teachers and student participants have traveled great distances every year to be involved. We all felt that this is one way we can honor the commitment that has been made year after year from the north. Plus, let me just say there were some colleges and churches agreeable to hosting us in the Twin Cities or a more centralized location, but they were cost prohibitive. We will keep lines open for possible sites for 2027 and beyond, and of course we welcome any suggestions for future sites.
- 2. Exciting Adjustments in format for Fall Auditions:** In taking time to do some much needed scrutinizing of our numbers over the past 6 or 7 years and our well trodden auditions format, we feel that adjustments needed to be made. In the light of student and teacher participation, we needed a different approach. We will be flexible, and ask for opinions on the other side of this to hear from you how it all went. We will have Friday division auditions as we have in the past. From these, we will determine, based on scores, who will advance on to Finals.

On Saturday, we will eliminate the semi finals all together, and instead spend the morning in an educational workshop for students and teachers. Finals will begin in the late morning with Music Theater finals being first, and Classical divisions starting thereafter. We should be concluding our total event in the late afternoon.

Yes! It is a lot to take in and think about for your students and participation this fall. We are well aware that at first glance you may see these as potentially difficult changes. Or, you may

say, thank goodness we get to go see Paul Bunyon and Babe and glorious Lake Bemidji. Whatever your reaction, we have thought through this detail by detail and feel very positive about this arrangement for the fall.

We will have **elections** for positions on the MN NATS Executive Board at our meeting in November in Bemidji. If you are interested in a leadership position, please contact me at wilkerso@stolaf.edu . These jobs are critical for the growth of MN NATS.

A HUGE thanks to Melyssa Rice and her amazing committee on a truly fantastic summer workshop at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin's presentation Soul Ingredients was spectacular. More to be said on that at our fall meeting.

Detailed information coming soon on registration, hotels, etc for BEMIDJI 2026. I will be looking forward to our time together. The current MN NATS board is committed to making this a great year.

Treasurer: [Jerry Elsbernd](#)

Secretary: [Holly Janz](#)

Auditions co-chairs: Holly Janz and [Kelly Burns](#)

Membership: [Wesley Dunnagan](#)

Thank you and have a wonderful start to the new season of singing!

Karen Wilkerson, President Minnesota NATS