

Nov. 28, 2023

# Flag and seal submission finalist assessment.

Prepared by Luis Fitch  
MN SERC Chair Commissioner



**Agenda:**

- Selected Flags and Seals.
- State Symbols.
- No Loons in the Flag.
- What we are known for in MN.
- The North Star State.
- Loons VS Stars.
- The selected six Flag designs.
- Submitted Stars.
- Which star represents the best "Star of the North"
- Submitted Seals.
- Q&A
- Next Steps

The State Emblems Redesign Commission has selected six designs as the basis for the next Minnesota state flag and five designs as the basis for the next state seal.

The designs will likely be modified, including changes to shapes and colors.

Minnesota state flag finalists are:



F29



F1154



F1953



F944



F1435



F2100

Minnesota state seal finalists are:



S224



S147



S2



S27



S6

# State symbols



State Gemstone  
Agate



State Soil  
Lester



State Muffin  
Blueberry



State Drink  
Milk



State Mushroom  
Morel



State Fruit  
Honeycrisp  
Apple



State Photograph  
Grace



State Song  
Hail!  
Minnesota



State Sport  
Ice Hockey



State Butterfly  
Monarch



State Bee  
Rusty Patched  
Bumblebee



State Fish  
Walleye



State Flower  
Pink Lady's  
Slipper



State Grain  
Wild Rice



State Tree  
Norway  
Pine



State Bird  
Loon



State Motto  
L'etoile du Nord



Liked by wambliwinyan and 3,583 others

mpnews This is what my face looked like when they told me there were no loons on the final six flag designs 😞

Anyways ... A wide-eyed red-tailed hawk was caught by a Minnesota Department of Transportation traffic camera — and it looked almost as shocked to see the camera as we are to see it.

MnDOT shared the video clip, captured on Nov. 12 at 4:45 p.m., from the traffic camera looking at Interstate 94 near Portland Avenue in Minneapolis.



POLITICS

# Where have all the loons gone? And other questions about the Minnesota flag redesign

Minnesotans love their loons and dogs and are not so sure about the finalists for the state flag.

By Briana Bierschbach Star Tribune | NOVEMBER 22, 2023 — 12:00PM

NEWS · POLITICS

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## Panel picks 6 finalists for redesigned MN state flag — and none have loons

However, the top choice for a new state seal centers around the state bird



LOCAL NEWS >

# More loons, color variety and designs wanted for final state flag designs



BY JASON RANTALA

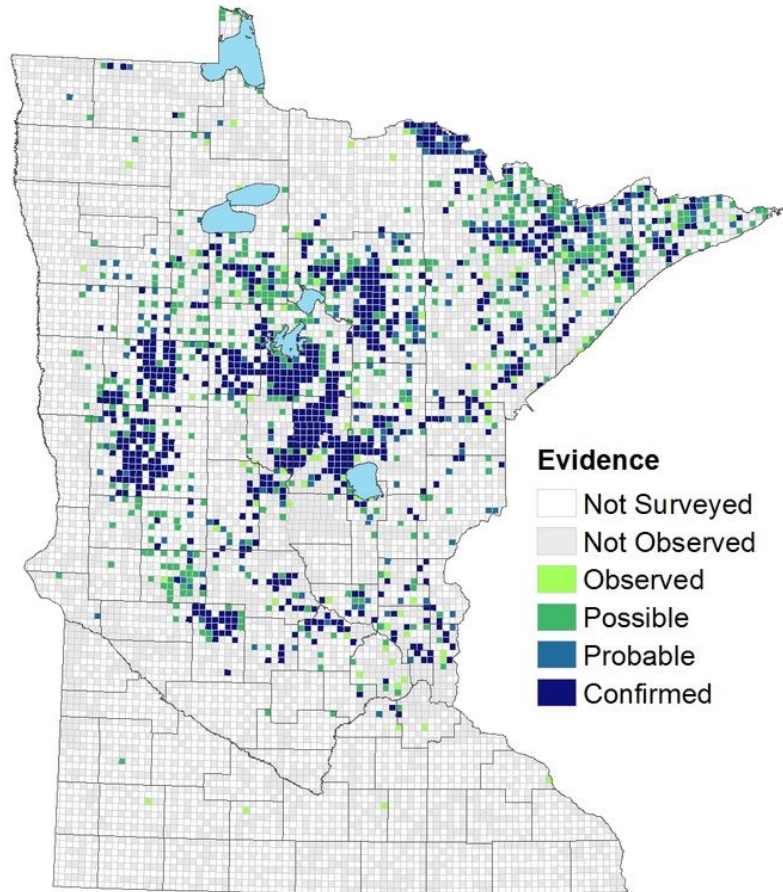
NOVEMBER 22, 2023 / 5:27 PM CST / CBS MINNESOTA





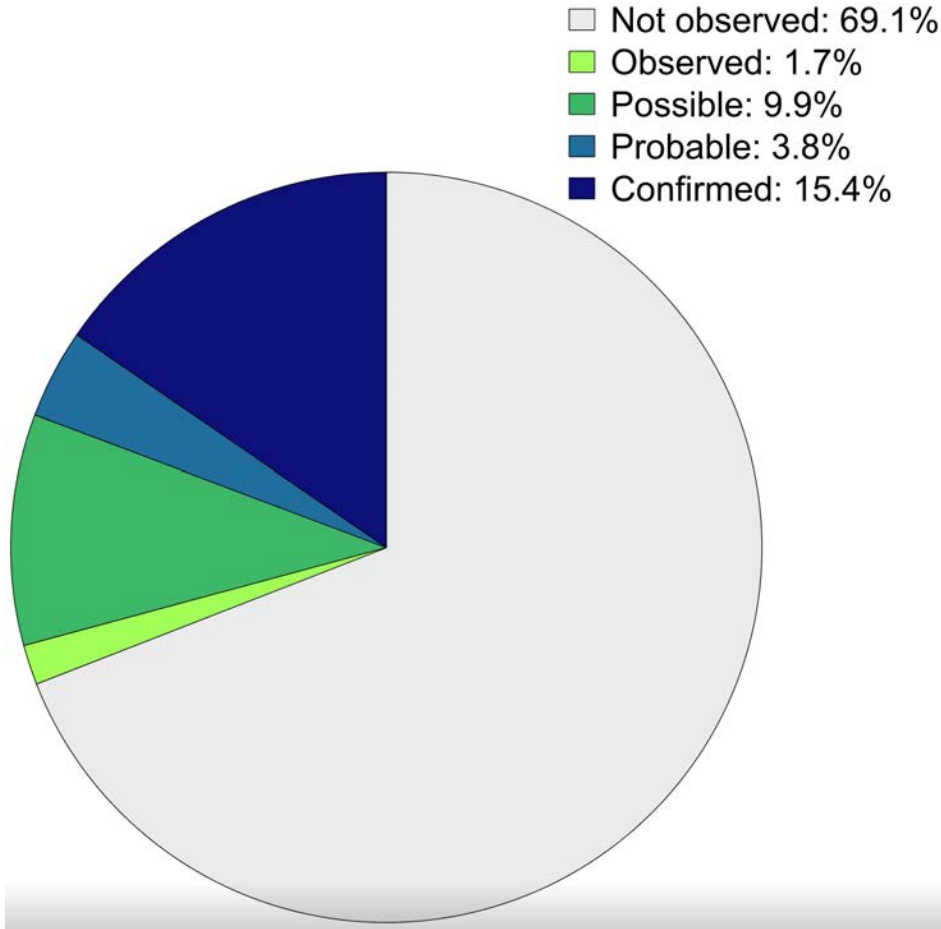
The loon  
(*Gavia immer*)  
became MN  
state bird in  
1961.



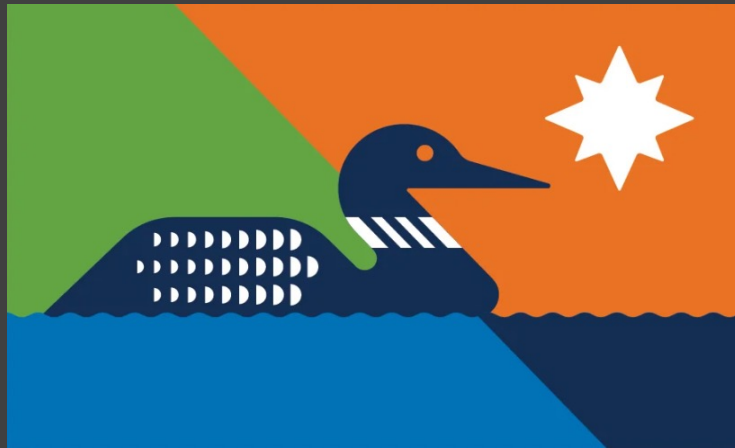
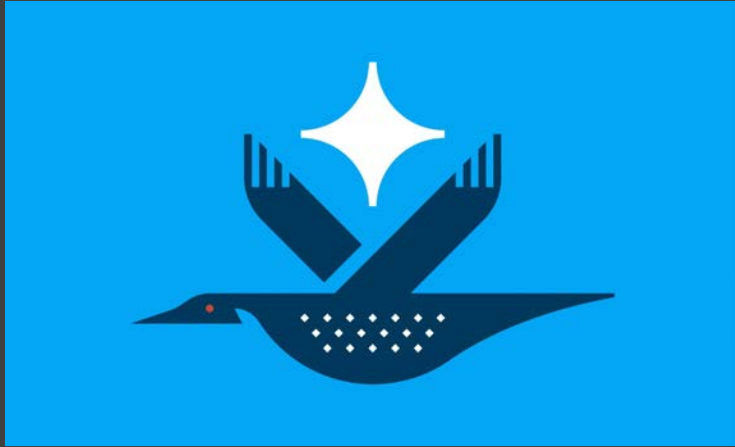


Breeding distribution of the Common Loon in Minnesota based on the Breeding Bird Atlas (2009 – 2013).





Summary statistics of observations by breeding status category for the Common Loon in Minnesota based on all blocks (each 5 km x 5 km) surveyed during the Breeding Bird Atlas (2009-2013).





























what is minnesota known for?



### Minnesota is known for

From sources across the web

-  Juicy Lucy
-  Minnesota State Fair
-  Boundary Waters Canoe ...
-  Hockey
-  Mississippi River
-  Voyageurs National Park
-  Wild rice
-  Hotdish
-  Prince
-  Lakes
-  Mall of America
-  Bob Dylan
-  Itasca State Park
-  Minnesota Wild
-  North Star State
-  Paul Bunyan
-  Snowmobiling
-  Twin Cities
-  Art museums
-  Caribou Coffee
-  Duluth
-  Minnesota Nice
-  Lefse
-  The Minnesota Goodbye

Show less ^

Feedback



**291** loons VS **1785** stars  
out of 2128 flags submissions.

Flags



- Present state flag adopted by the 1957 legislature.
- Flag is royal blue with a gold fringe.
- Center of the flag features the state seal.
- Wreath on the flag incorporates three significant dates:
  - 1858: Statehood year
  - 1819: Year Fort Snelling was established
  - 1893: Year the original flag was adopted.
- Nineteen stars encircle the wreath.
- Stars symbolize Minnesota as the 19th state to enter the Union after the original 13.

All flags



F29  
9 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



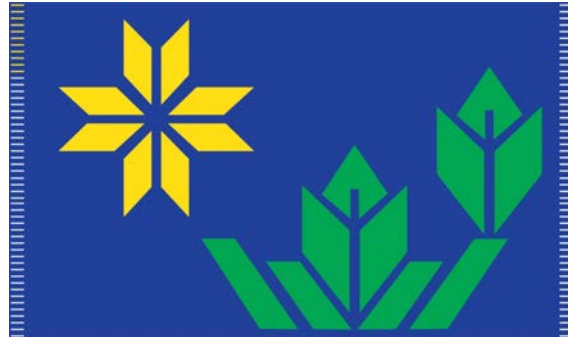
F1953  
8 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



F1154  
8 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



F944  
7 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



F1435  
6 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



F2100  
6 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



F29



# “L'etoile du Nord flag”



Grayscale value



Reversible



Front



View from far away

Simple to draw: YES  NO

Reversible: YES  NO

MN Symbolism: YES  NO

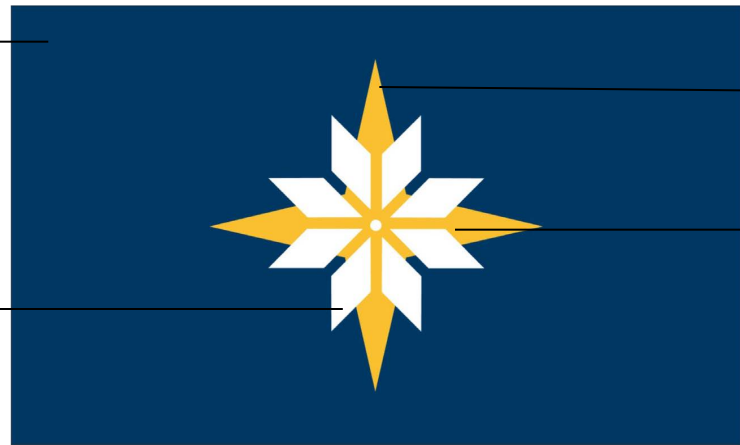
Few basic colors: YES  NO

Distinctive or related: YES  NO

Does not represent a single community: YES  NO

**Blue:**  
Minnesota' Sky-tinted water: The land of 10,000 lakes. The Great Lakes begin in Duluth. The Mighty Mississippi is formed in our state. If any state has a case to have a blue flag, it is Minnesota.

**The Snowflake:**  
Winter, we embrace it.



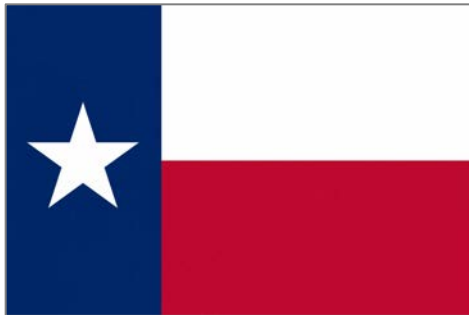
**Gold:**  
Represents the rich resources of the land.

**The Directional Star:**  
“L'etoile du Nord” The North Star. If you follow the North Star, you will end up in Minnesota.

\*As a bonus this is also the shape of the star on the floor in the rotunda of the Capitol building in Saint Paul.

F29

9 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

L'etoile du Nord flag Blue: Minnesota' Sky-tinted water: The land of 10,000 lakes. The Great Lakes begin in Duluth. The Mighty Mississippi is formed in our state. If any state has a case to have a blue flag, it is Minnesota. The Directional Star: "L'etoile du Nord" The North Star. If you follow the North Star, you will end up in Minnesota. Gold represents the rich resources of the land. The Snowflake: Winter We embrace it. Put on a sweater and stay warm. As a bonus this is also the shape of the star on the floor in the rotunda of the Capitol building in Saint Paul.

**Connection to MN:**

I live in Saint Paul. Previously Minneapolis, Roseville, and New Brighton. I came up for college in 2002 and have stayed (minus one year spent abroad).

F 1953

F1953

8 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



# “Star of the North”



Grayscale value



Reversible



Front



View from far away

Simple to draw: YES  NO

Reversible: YES  NO

MN Symbolism: YES  NO

Few basic colors: YES  NO

Distinctive or related: YES  NO

Does not represent a single community: YES  NO

**Navy color:**  
is the abstract  
shape of Minnesota.

**The star:**  
A white northern star  
represents our state's  
motto: L'etoile du Nord,  
meaning “star of the  
north”, and also  
represents a symbol of  
unity above a land of  
diversity. Winter, we  
embrace it.



**White:**  
The white stripe  
symbolizes snow.

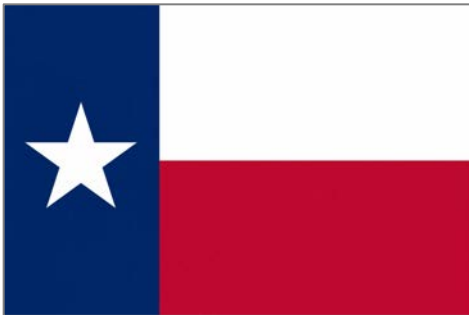
**Green:**  
The green stripe represents the  
beauty of our nature and also  
the important role agriculture  
has played in our history.

**Light blue:**  
Light blue stripe represents the  
significance of water to our state,  
each as the land of 10,000 lakes,  
the birth state of the Mississippi  
River, and the origins of  
Minnesota's name –which came  
from the Dakota's Sioux  
language– and translates to  
“a place of sky-tinted water.”



F1953

8 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

In navy is the abstract shape of Minnesota. A white northern star represents our state's motto: L'etoile du Nord, meaning “star of the north”, and also represents a symbol of unity above a land of diversity.

The three colors on the right signify important aspects to Minnesotan history and culture: the white stripe symbolizes snow; the green stripe represents the beauty of our nature and also the important role agriculture has played in our history; and the light blue stripe represents the significance of water to our state, each as the land of 10,000 lakes, the birth state of the Mississippi River, and the origins of Minnesota’s name –which came from the Dakota’s Sioux language– and translates to “a place of sky-tinted water.”

Overall, I wanted the design to be very simple while also symbolizing the various important aspects of our history, cultures, and people.

**Connection to MN:**

I was born in and have lived in Minnesota for every year of my life.

F 1 1 5 4



# The “Starflake”



Grayscale value



Reversible



Front



View from far away

Simple to draw: YES  NO

Reversible: YES  NO

MN Symbolism: YES  NO

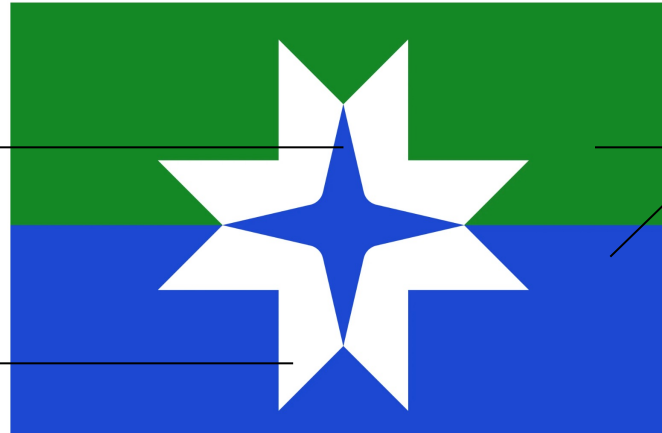
Few basic colors: YES  NO

Distinctive or related: YES  NO

Does not represent a single community: YES  NO

**North Star:**  
This 8-pointed motif contains a hidden North Star in the center. The 8-pointed star immediately brings to mind a snowflake, which reflects our climate and cultural resiliency.

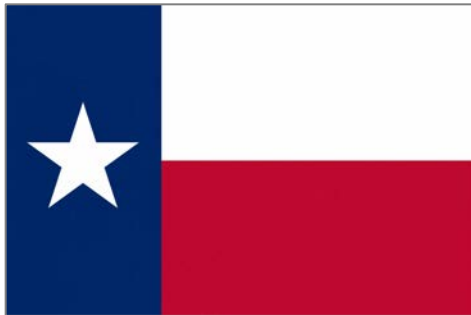
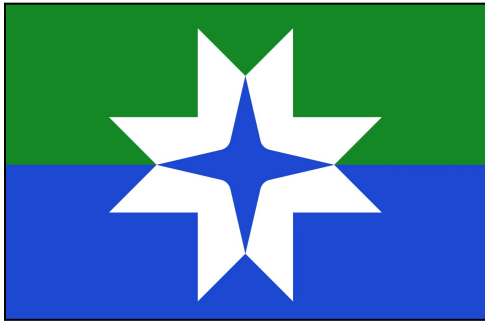
**8-pointed stars:**  
8-pointed stars are also found in Ojibwe and Sioux star blankets, Nordic Fair Isle patterns, agrarian barn quilts, and the capital rotunda itself.



**Blue and Green:**  
The blue and green background represent a lake and wooded shoreline of the boundary waters symbols of Minnesota’s natural resources.

F1154

8 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.





NORTH  
STAR



SIOUX & OJIBWE  
STAR BLANKETS



NORDIC  
FAIR ISLE  
SNOWFLAKE



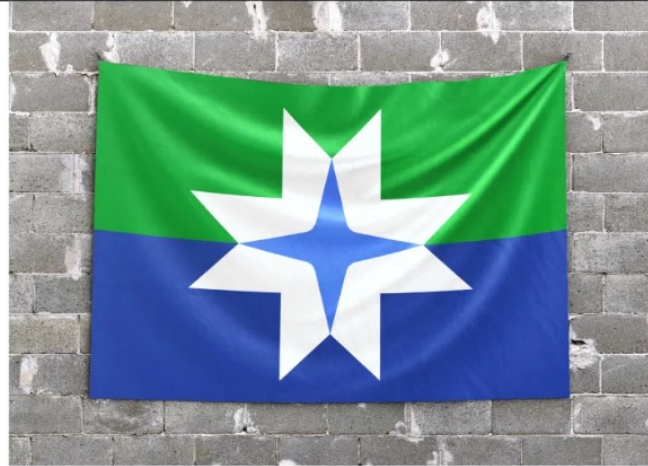
BARN  
QUILTS



CAPITAL  
ROTUNDA

LAKES

FOREST



ALT. DESIGN

**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

Bold, simple, proprietary, and rich with symbolism, this 8-pointed motif contains a hidden North Star in the center. The 8-pointed star immediately brings to mind a snowflake, which reflects our climate and cultural resiliency.

8-pointed stars are also found in Ojibwe and Sioux star blankets, Nordic Fair Isle patterns, agrarian barn quilts, and the capital rotunda itself. The blue and green background represent a lake and wooded shoreline of the boundary waters: symbols of Minnesota's natural resources. This 'starflake' symbol is easy to reproduce, and is a unique, proprietary symbol contains a depth of meaning to Minnesota.

**Connection to MN:**

I am a resident of Minnesota and proud to live in a state that strives to conserve its natural resources, aims for inclusivity, and provides diverse economic opportunities.

I am a graduate from the University of Minnesota and always visit the deep-fried pickle stand at the state fair.



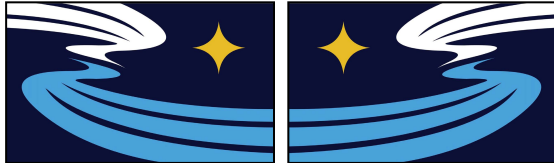
F9444



# “Mirror of the Sky”



Grayscale value



Reversible



View from far away

Simple to draw: YES  NO

Reversible: YES  NO

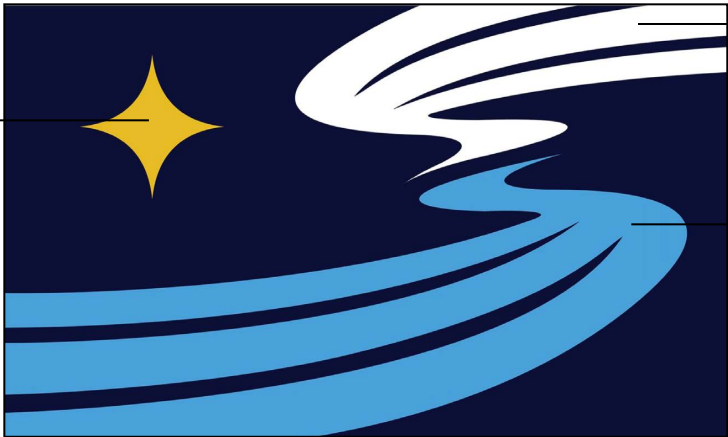
MN Symbolism: YES  NO

Few basic colors: YES  NO

Distinctive or related: YES  NO

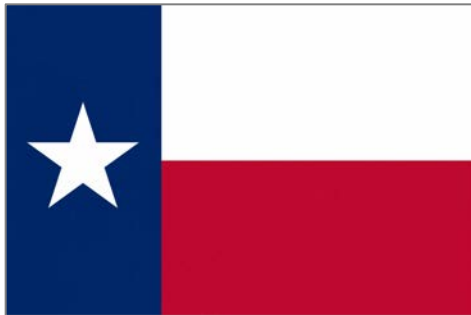
Does not represent a single community: YES  NO

**Star:**  
A guiding, four-pointed North Star inspired by the symbols and astronomy of Dakota and Ojibwe tribes.



**Sky and Waters:**  
This design pays tribute to Minnesota’s diverse and dynamic landscape, with wisps of snow, clouds, and aurora reflected by pristine, bending waters.

F994  
7 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

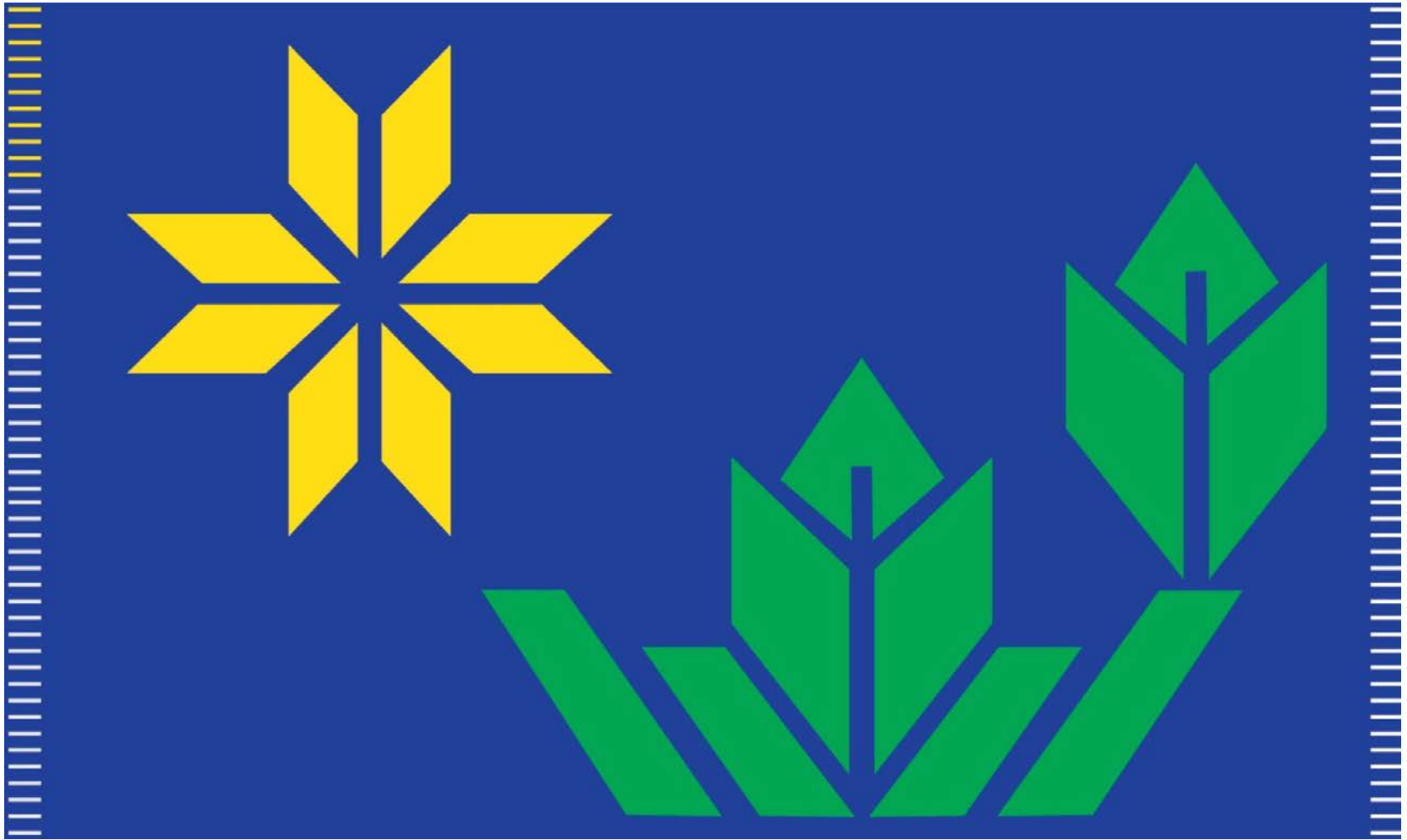
"Mirror of the Sky" — unique, essential, enduring, and bold. This design pays tribute to Minnesota's diverse and dynamic landscape, with wisps of snow, clouds, and aurora reflected by pristine, bending waters, and a guiding, four-pointed North Star inspired by the symbols and astronomy of Dakota and Ojibwe tribes.

**Connection to MN:**

Todd is a Minnesota-born artist, designer, writer, and filmmaker whose work explores the spaces we inhabit and engage, and the ways we move between here, there, then, and now.

Born in Minneapolis and raised in Saint Paul, Todd has a bachelor's degree in Digital Media Arts from Hamline University, and has worked since 2004 as creative director for a local multimedia design agency. He lives in Saint Paul with his wife Caitlin. His father, is a first-generation Minnesotan, astronomer, and retired White Bear Lake science teacher who lives in Saint Paul with his wife.

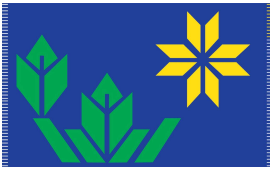
F 1435



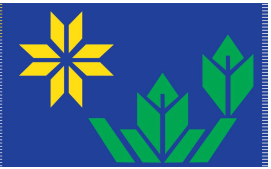
# “Ojibwe Loom”



Grayscale value



Reversible



Front



View from far away

Simple to draw: YES  NO

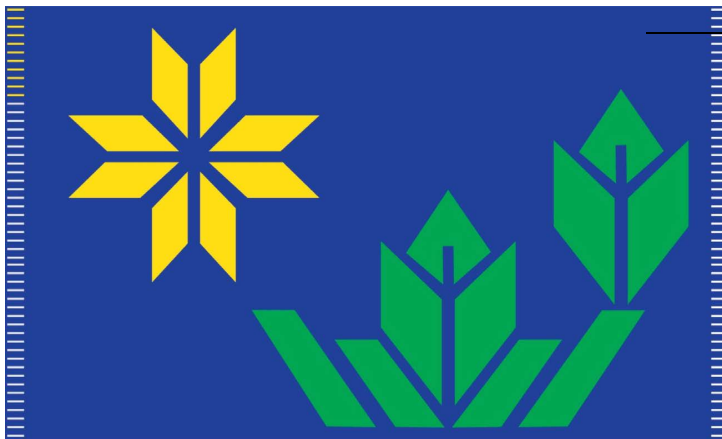
Reversible: YES  NO

MN Symbolism: YES  NO

Few basic colors: YES  NO

Distinctive or related: YES  NO

Does not represent a single community: YES  NO

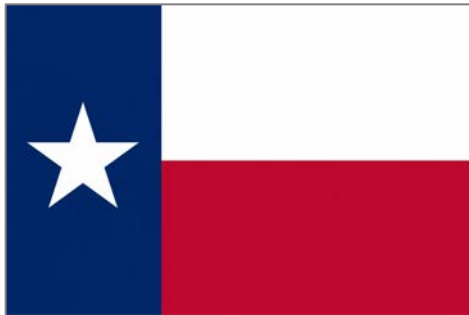
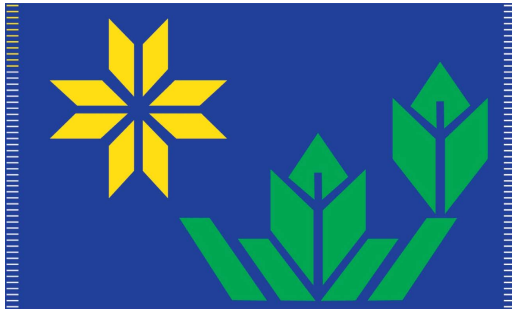


**Trees and Night Sky:**  
Our beloved trees, the night sky, and a stripe to represent each of the tribal nations and counties in Minnesota.

Done in Ojibwe loom style, this is a truly Minnesota design.



F1435  
6 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

Our beloved trees, the night sky, and a stripe to represent each of the tribal nations and counties in Minnesota. Done in Ojibwe loom style, this is a truly Minnesota design.

**Connection to MN:**

Sarah is an Ojibwe artist, small business owner of HB, life-long Minnesotan, and member of the Fond du Lac Nation. Known for her design work bringing together Ojibwe art with both traditional and modern forms, Howes would be proud to be a part of this beautiful transformation.

F21000



6 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.

# “White North Star”



Grayscale value



Reversible



Front



View from far away

Simple to draw: YES  NO

Reversible: YES  NO

MN Symbolism: YES  NO

Few basic colors: YES  NO

Distinctive or related: YES  NO

Does not represent a single community: YES  NO



**Blue:**

The blue field at the top of the flag represents the sky-blue waters found in the state's beautiful 10,000 lakes.

**White:**

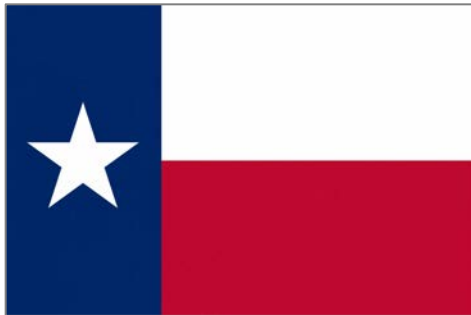
The slender white line represents the many abundant winter activities that are available in the state.

**Green:**

The green field at the bottom represents the state's green forests, its natural wilderness areas, and also the abundant agricultural crops produced on the state's productive farm-lands.

F2100

6 stickers out of 12 Commissioners.



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

White North star for north star state. Blue field at the top of the flag represents the sky-blue waters found in the state's beautiful 10,000 lakes. The green field at the bottom represents the state's green forests, its natural wilderness areas, and also the abundant agricultural crops produced on the state's productive farm-lands. The slender white line represents the many abundant winter activities that are available in the state.

**Connection to MN:**

I am a proud native son of the state of Minnesota. I graduated from Mankato high school in 1958 (Minnesota's centennial year). I also graduated from Mankato state university.

Stars





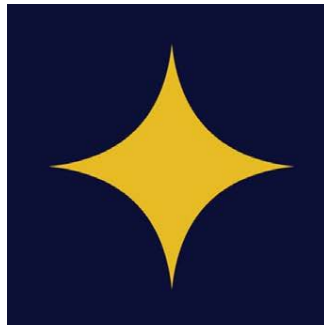
F29



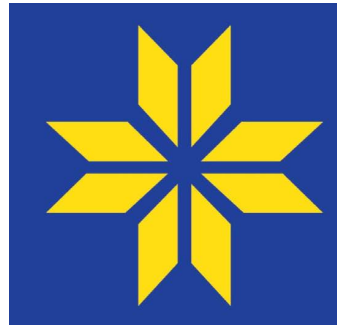
F1953



F1154



F944



F1435



F2100



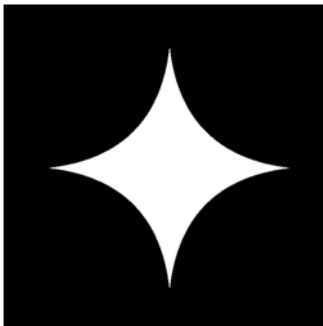
F29



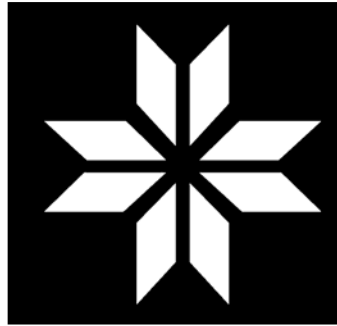
F1953



F1154



F944



F1435



F2100

Easy to to draw.

Difficult to to draw.



F944



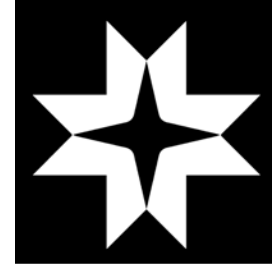
F2100



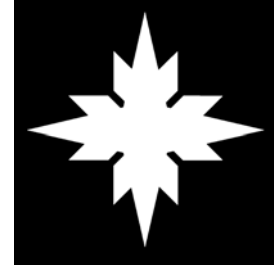
F1953



F1435



F1154



F29



F944



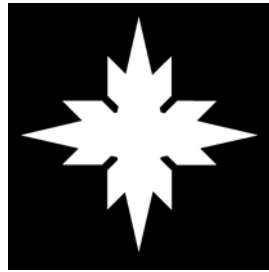
F2100



F1435



F1953



F29



F1154



The brass and translucent glass eight-pointed star symbolizing Minnesota's motto, "L'Étoile du Nord" (The Star of the North) on the floor of the Minnesota State Capitol rotunda. St. Paul, Minnesota

Cass Gilbert (Designer)



The eight-pointed star can be seen in the ceiling of the Great Hall and throughout the building. Each pair of points represents the letter M for Minnesota.

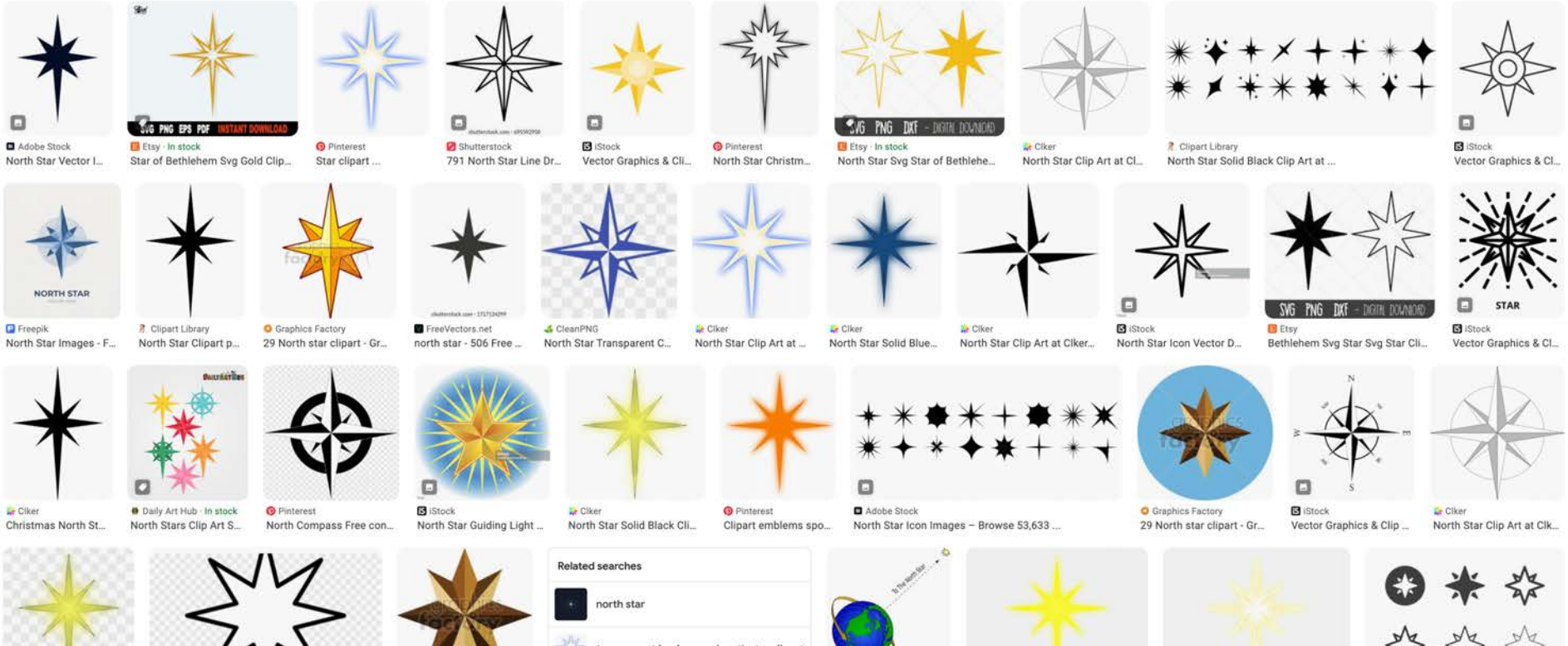


Native Americans — Dakota, Ojibwe, as well as people from other tribal nations — have been in the Minnesota area for thousands of years.



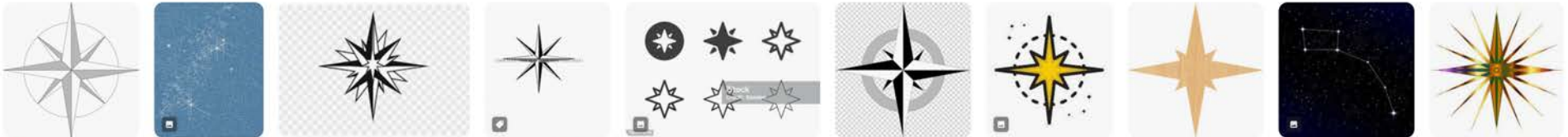
Barn Quilt Trail in Central Minnesota countryside. You can find over 100 richly designed barn quilts - quilt blocks painted on wood squares – scattered throughout Morrison, Todd, Wadena, and Cass counties.



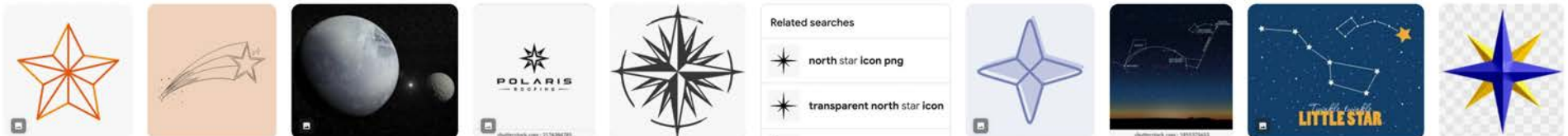




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Create something new

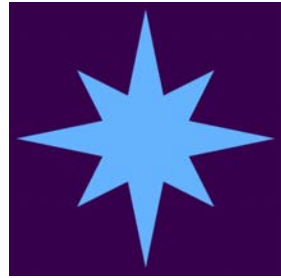
See brand new images generated with AI



Other  
stars



1



2



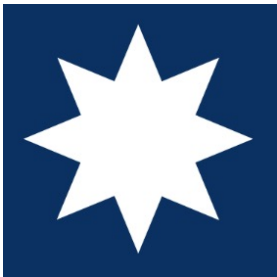
3



4



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6



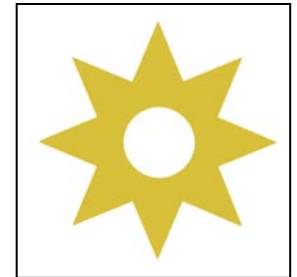
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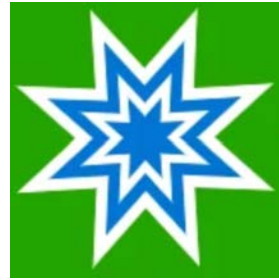
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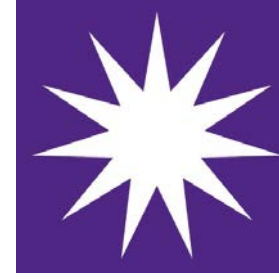
16



17



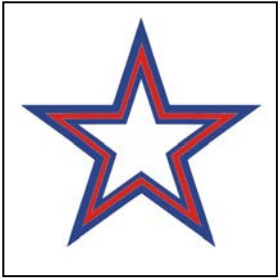
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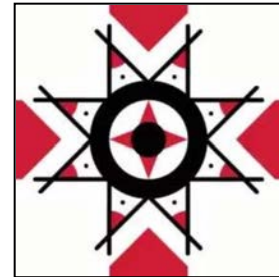
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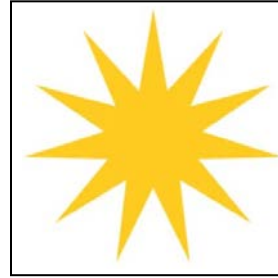
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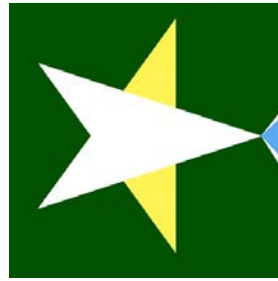
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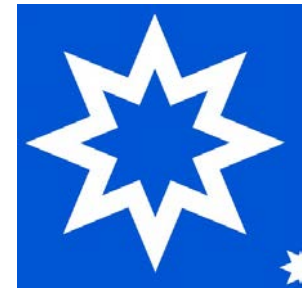
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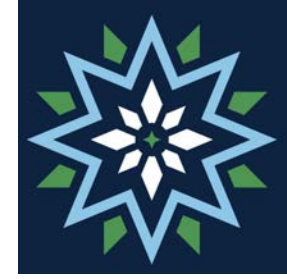
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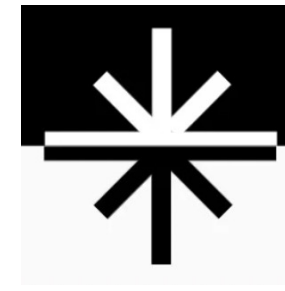
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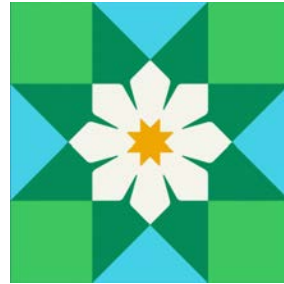
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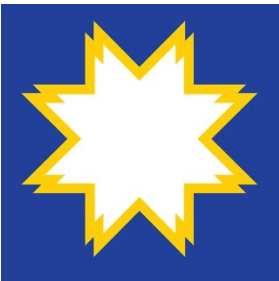
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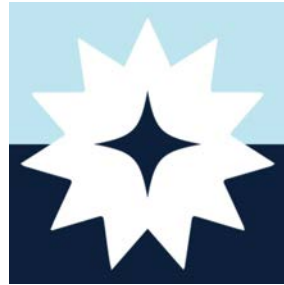




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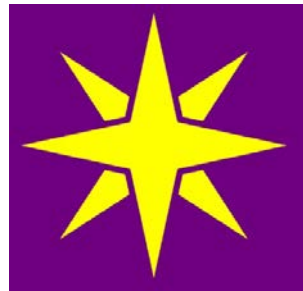
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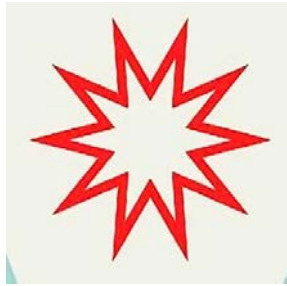
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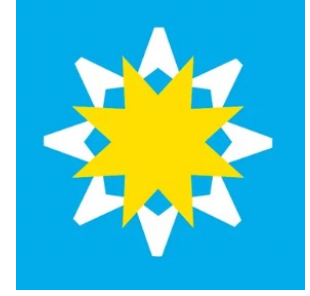
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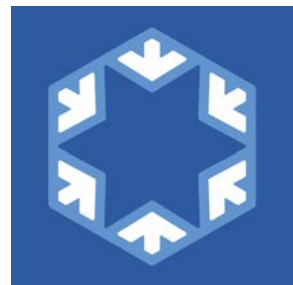
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Seals



**Adoption of State Seal (1858):**

- The symbol was adopted as the state seal in 1858.

**Role of Minnesota Secretary of State:**

- The Minnesota Secretary of State is responsible for the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota.
- Affixes the seal to government documents to make them official.
- Acts as the State's signature, authenticating official documents.

**Historical Context (1858):**

- When Minnesota became a state in 1858, there was no official state seal despite constitutional requirements.
- Francis Baasen, the first secretary of state, used the previous territorial government's seal temporarily.

**Changes and Authorization (1858-1861):**

- Governor Henry Sibley authorized the use of the territorial government's seal.
- Sibley made design changes, corrected errors, and replaced the Latin motto with a French one.
- Legislature adopted the new design in 1861, officially making it the state seal.



**Legislative Changes (1983):**

- In 1983, the Legislature altered the seal to clarify design details and avoid variations in artistic interpretations.

**Symbolism of the State Seal:**

- **Sun and Horizon:**
  - The sun on the western horizon represents the flat plains covering much of the state.
- **Cultivated Ground and Plow:**
  - Symbolize the importance of agriculture in the state.
- **Mississippi River and St. Anthony Falls:**
  - Depicted to emphasize the importance of natural resources for trade and commerce.
- **Three Pine Trees:**
  - Represent the state tree (Red or Norway pine) and the three major pine regions: St. Croix, Mississippi, and Lake Superior.
- **Tree Stump:**
  - Symbolizes the significance of Minnesota's timber industry.
- **American Indian on Horseback:**
  - Represents the state's American Indian heritage.
- **Tools (Horse, Spear, Axe, Rifle, Plow):**
  - Signify important tools used for hunting and labor in the state.





**S224**

12 stickers out of 12  
Commissioners.



**S147**

10 stickers out of 12  
Commissioners.



**S2**

8 stickers out of 12  
Commissioners.



**S6**

8 stickers out of 12  
Commissioners.

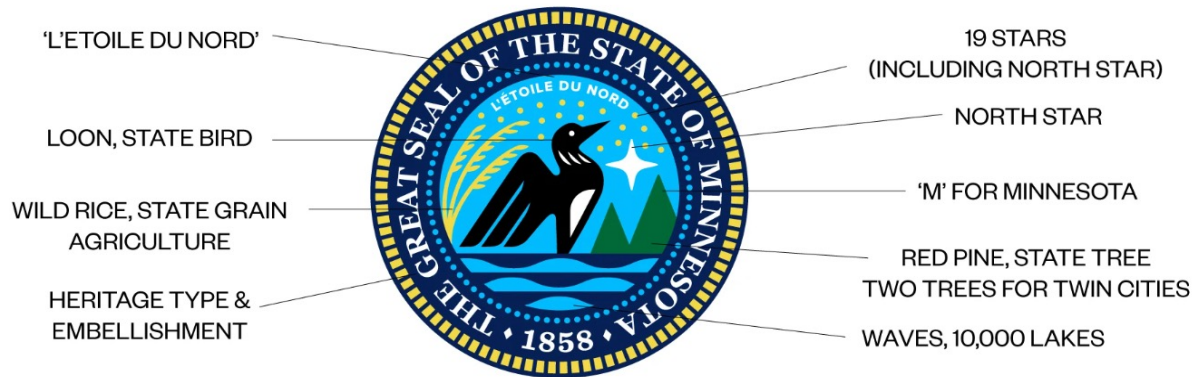
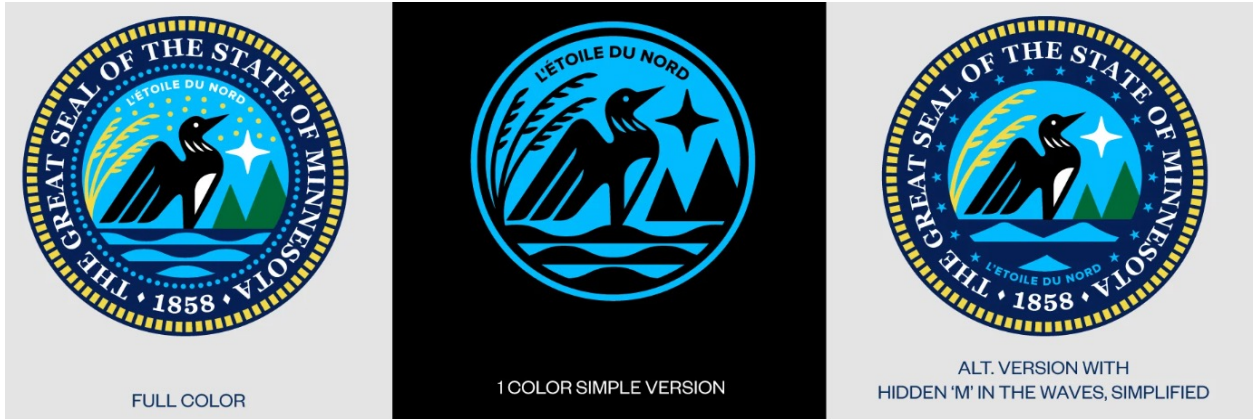


**S27**

6 stickers out of 12  
Commissioners.

S224





**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

This emblem features the state bird in a pose that signifies pride and energy. The waves symbolize our abundance of lakes. The wild rice, our state grain, represents agriculture of today and of Native American tribes. The pine trees represent our forests and land.

19 stars fill the sky to represent MN as the 19th state to join the union after the original 13. The large North Star represents Minnesota. Elements from the previous seal are used: the circular shape, similar typography and radial pattern. This symbol represents the abundance of natural resources that are the foundation of the economy and vitality of Minnesota.

**Connection to MN:**

I am a resident of Minnesota and proud to live in a state that strives to conserve its natural resources, aims for inclusivity, and provides diverse economic opportunities. I am a graduate from the University of Minnesota and always visit the deep-fried pickle stand at the state fair.

S 147



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

Stella Borealis — Star of the North A deep navy field for the lakes and dark sky The Polaris, North Star, centered true A radiant flake from the fresh fallen snow In a compass rose river, sky blue An evergreen forest of 32 points Let our place in the Union be known Together a noble light leading the way Guiding all who would call this land home.

**Connection to MN:**

Born and raised in Minnesota, I have spent over 40 years loving this state, 20 years working locally in brand design for some of the state's most recognized corporations, 10 years raising a family here, and 6 years running a small, family-owned business devoted to this great land we call 'Up North'.



S2



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

My proposed State Seal represents the North Star State as a guiding light for the Union and a gathering place for many cultures. It recalls the state motto, and reflects the North Star pattern on the Capitol Rotunda floor, by architect Cass Gilbert – with distinct versions based on the brass inset (embossed/medallion) & marble inlay (whether colorized according to the North Star Flag, or in the tonal colors of the rotunda floor).

**Connection to MN:**

I've lived in Minnesota most of my life, currently Blooming Prairie. I launched a bipartisan effort for a new state flag in 1989, testifying twice before a House committee to promote change. I also designed the "North Star Flag" as a sample redesign, and suggested a contest. Lee Herold of Rochester, another longtime Minnesotan, assisted my design and effort. My Seal and final concept was aided by Francisco Gregoric (Argentina), and is inspired by the Capitol rotunda floor pattern. Vector art for my proposals is available upon request.

S6



**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

“L’etoile du Nord” ribbon inspired by the photo on SOS website for the state motto. Elements taken from current seal to incorporate some continuity. Wording, Borders, State admission year. Blue: Minnesota’ Sky-tinted water: The land of 10,000 lakes. The Great Lakes begin in Duluth. The Mighty Mississippi is formed in our state. If any state has a case to have a blue flag, it is Minnesota.

The Directional Star: The North Star. If you follow the North Star, you will end up in Minnesota. Gold represents the rich resources of the land. The Snowflake: Winter, we embrace it. Put on a sweater and stay warm. As a bonus this is also the shape of the star on the floor in the rotunda of the Capitol building in Saint Paul.

**Connection to MN:**

I live in Saint Paul. Previously Minneapolis, Roseville, and New Brighton. I came up for college in 2002 and decided to stay and start my family here (minus one year spent living abroad).

S27





**A brief statement on the rationale for design, explaining the design choices, highlighting how they meet the project objectives and represent Minnesota:**

The True North Star — L'Étoile du Nord. Designed to pair with the True North Flag (<https://flag.mn/>) in honor of our state's many traditions and backgrounds, this design moves past the existing seal's convolution and revisionism for a sharper focus on our state's strongest, most universal symbol: The North Star.

**Connection to MN:**

Todd is a Minnesota-born artist, designer, writer, and filmmaker whose work explores the spaces we inhabit and engage, and the ways we move between here, there, then, and now. Born in Minneapolis and raised in Saint Paul, Todd has a bachelor's degree in Digital Media Arts from Hamline University, and has worked since 2004 as creative director for a local multimedia design agency. He lives in Saint Paul with his wife Caitlin.

Next

## Next steps:

- Collect and Review Public Feedback on the Flags and Seal Designs
- Make Adjustments Based on Feedback
- Finalize the Six Flag and Seal Designs
- Consider Symbolism, Aesthetics, and Popular Appeal
- Evaluate Submitted Seal Designs for Alignment with Minnesota's Identity

Q&A