

TRANSPORTATION

Lincoln Avenue Project In Fergus Falls Underway

10-01-19

The last of the major infrastructure projects is underway in Fergus Falls with work on Lincoln Avenue starting. Given weather conditions or unexpected delays, City Engineer Brian Yavarow says the timeline is around a week or so...

Lincoln Avenue Project - Brian Yavarow 31 SEC

OUTCUE: "...but, that's our schedule right now."

"...The contractor has indicated 4 to 5 days for completion. They're bringing in a lot of equipment. There should be flag personnel and a lot of traffic control and we'll be doing some oversight on it. Once that's completed we'll do the striping re-establish the striping and some restoration work, primarily between College Way and Broadway. We had to replace the ADA pedestrian ramps. Hopefully the weather cooperates, like I said it has not been very conducive but that's their schedule right now..."

Yavarow says milling operations have commenced near I-94 and the contractor will work their way east. The contractor on the project is Central Specialties of Alexandria.

Click it or Ticket: Extra Enforcement in West Central Minnesota Sept. 16-28

09-16-19

Click-It or Ticket extra seat belt enforcement begins today going through September 28th in West Central Minnesota. An event in Moorhead this morning will highlight the extra enforcement campaign which the Minnesota State Patrol will demonstrate how seat belts can save lives.

Fargo Moorhead Ambulance Services will simulate the effects of a crash with a rollover simulator. The event will feature Sgt. Jesse Grabow with the Minnesota State Patrol, Katy Kressin with West Central Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Regional Director, and Clay County Sheriff Mark Empting

The State Patrol says ninety-six unbuckled motorists were killed just last year in Minnesota. According to the 2019 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 93.4 percent of Minnesotans are buckling up in the front seat, but only 79% of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts in West Central Minnesota.

The event is scheduled to begin at 10am this morning at F-M Ambulance Moorhead Station at 1519 Main Ave.

Highway 59 and Willow Street Roundabout Repairs To Begin Monday

09-13-19

A heads up to motorists in the Detroit Lakes area, expect delays as road construction on the Highway 59/Willow Street roundabout begin on Monday.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation will conduct pavement repairs to the Hwy 59 and Willow Street roundabout in Detroit Lakes. Work is scheduled to begin Sept. 16, 2019 and will be completed by Sept. 23, weather permitting. MN DOT flaggers will be on hand to control traffic.

Expect Delays At The Highway 59 And Willow Street Roundabout In Detroit Lakes This Wednesday

09-24-19

On Wednesday, weather permitting, crews will complete final striping at the U.S. Highway 59 and Willow Street roundabout. The work is part of a pavement repair project at the intersection.

Flaggers and a pilot car will control traffic, but delays on Highway 59, Willow Street and Long Lake Road are expected. The Minnesota Department of Transportation urges motorists to always drive with caution, and reminds them to obey traffic control, slow down in the work zone and never enter a roadway that has been blocked with barriers or cones.

For real-time traffic and travel information in Minnesota, visit www.511mn.org

MNLARS Transition To VTRS

09-11-19

The revamping of Minnesota's troubled vehicle licensing and registration system has been the focus of a bipartisan legislative oversight committee this week.

Earlier this year, the state pulled the plug on MNLARS (MINN'-larz) ... and signed an outside vendor to overhaul it.

Officials told the committee that a plan is under way to replace MNLARS by 2021 with what's called VTRS (VIT'-rus)...the Vehicle Title and Registration System.

Representative Frank Hornstein is the committee co-chair.

#75344 out: behind us :09

The new vendor is "Fast Enterprises," which signed a \$34 million deal with the state. Minnesota's program director of Driver and Vehicle Services said the deal was \$2 million dollars under budget.

"Fast" has implemented its software for similar programs in 11 other states.

I-94 Aggressive Driving Crackdown Begins Today

08-27-19

Starting today the Minnesota State Patrol is taking part in a crackdown on aggressive driving on I-94 from Wisconsin all the way to Montana. The patrol says their goal is to change behavior and combat speeding, aggressive driving, tailgating and distracted driving. The campaign will be in effect through September first. Patrol units from Wisconsin, North Dakota and Montana will also be involved in the effort.

Multi-state "SLAM" Campaign Wraps Up

09-04-19

Law enforcement agencies across several states wrapped up an aggressive driving crackdown, dubbed SLAM, on I-94 Sunday.

State troopers in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota and Montana spent nearly a week hyper-focused on aggressive drivers on I-94.

With an eye towards curbing the rate of fatal crashes on the roadway, the units were targeting speeders, tailgaters and distracted drivers.

Hands-Free Driving Law Takes Effect Today in Minnesota

08-01-19

It is now illegal for Minnesota drivers to use their cell phones while behind-the-wheel except in hands-free mode. Sgt. Jesse Grabow with the Minnesota State Patrol says the only thing people can do while driving is put their phone into hands-free mode with single-touch activation.

HANDS FREE Sgt Jesse Grabow 20 sec

OUTCUE: "...calling 911 or something like that."

"...Can you talk on your cell phone? Yes. It just needs to be in a hands-free mode. The biggest question is what can't I do with my phone? It just comes down to you may not hold your phone in your hand. The only time you can actually ever hold your phone in your hand is to talk or go down the road with it, would be like calling 911 or something like that..."

Sgt. Grabow says if you're driving down the road and your phone rings and you're not holding it, you can touch the phone to answer that call. It's now also illegal for drivers to hold their phone while at a red light or stopped in traffic.

Construction Zone Accident Near Fergus Falls Sends Seven To Hospital

08-06-19

A construction zone accident involving two vehicles on I-94 near Fergus Falls on Monday morning sent seven people to the hospital.

The State Patrol says that at around 11am a Chevrolet Silverado was stopped on the right shoulder of I-94 near mile post 57 in Buse Township, which was providing early warning for a construction zone. A Dodge Ram pickup that was heading west side-swiped the Silverado. The truck was apparently carrying 10 people from eight different states when the crash occurred.

The State Patrol reports that 27 year-old Douglas Harris, 35-year-old Eric Fortner, 21-year-old Ashley Holland, 35-year-old Randy Sheller, 55-year-old Rodney Smith, 36-year-old Brandon Weaver, and 48-year-old Andre White were all treated for non-life threatening injuries. The three other passengers in the truck did not sustain any injuries.

The driver of the Chevy Silverado, 61-year-old Michael Lencowski of Garrison was not injured.

The State Patrol says alcohol was not a factor in the crash.

Fergus Falls Police, the Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office, and Ringdahl Ambulance all responded to the scene.

Temporary Closures of Interstate 94 Between Alexandria and Garfield

08-07-19

Starting today motorists will encounter temporary closures on Interstate 94 between Alexandria and Garfield in both directions, as crews perform emergency repairs.

From 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., westbound I-94 will close between the Highway 29 interchange and Highway 114 interchange. From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., eastbound I-94 will close between the Highway 114 interchange to the Highway 29 interchange.

During the closures, westbound traffic will be rerouted to Highway 29 (Exit 103) to Highway 27 and Highway 114. Eastbound traffic will be rerouted to Highway 114 (Exit 97) to Highway 27 and Highway 29. The exit and entrance ramps to Highway 27 (Exit 100) will also be closed during this work.

Currently this section of I-94 has head-to-head traffic in the westbound lanes as part of an overall project that includes concrete resurfacing in the eastbound lanes from Garfield to Alexandria and replacing the bridges over Lake Latoka. The emergency repairs will help to preserve the pavement in the westbound lanes.

Pedal Fergus Falls To Offer Smart Cycling Course

08-07-19

For lots of Fergus Falls residents, commuting through city traffic on a bicycle can be confusing. With that in mind, Pedal Fergus Falls will be offering a Smart Cycling course later this month, which will give area cyclists the confidence they need to ride safely and legally in traffic. Jean Bowman with Pedal Fergus Falls says the course will feature the most knowledgeable riders in the area...

Bowman Safe Cycling Class 16 SEC

OUTCUE: "...safe on the roads."

Bowman says the course will covers bicycle safety checks, on-bike skills and crash avoidance techniques, and includes a student manual. This class will meet on Saturday, August 24th from 9 to 4 at the Community Education Center at 340 Friberg Avenue. Registration is \$25 and includes lunch. You can register at pedalff.org, or for more information go to [pedal Fergus falls](#) on Facebook.

Road Preservation Projects On Highway 10 And Highway 59 Begin Next Week

08-08-19

Motorists will encounter alternating lane closures in both directions on Highway 10 and Highway 59 in Otter Tail County starting Monday, August 12, as crews begin road preservation projects on both highways.

The work will start on Highway 10, east of Perham to Frazee, which includes the Highway 78 and County Road 80 exit/entrance ramps. Crews will be in this area for approximately two weeks, and will then switch to Highway 59, north of Pelican Rapids. Final striping is expected to take place after Labor Day. Motorists should plan for daily lane closures and lane shifts in the areas where crews are working.

As part of this work, crews will start by milling off a thin layer of pavement before repaving the roadway. This preventative maintenance work will help extend the life of the road.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation urges motorists to always drive with caution, and reminds them to slow down in the work zone and never enter a roadway that has been blocked with barriers or cones.

Season Was Most Severe In Nearly A Decade

08-08-19

The final numbers are in, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation says they spent nearly \$133 million dollars to clear roads during the 2018-19 winter season and crews faced some of the most severe weather in the state in a decade, according to a new MnDOT winter maintenance report released on Wednesday.

The annual report breaks down fiscal year costs, winter severity, snow totals and other factors. Statistics are separated by each of MnDOT's eight transportation districts to show the variety of impact across the state.

However, MnDOT used less road salt and sand during the 2018-19 season compared to the previous winter, applying more liquid chemicals, such as potassium acetate, BEET HEET, Apex-C and RG8. The chemicals proved to enhance the performance of road salt during extreme conditions, which led to routes being cleared faster and with less material.

The MnDOT 2018-19 Winter Maintenance At a glance report is available at the MnDot website.

More Road Construction Coming

08-12-19

It's been a summer full of road and street construction in Fergus Falls. City Administrator Andrew Bremseth says the Lincoln Avenue project will begin soon...

Bremseth FF Construction 28 SEC

OUTCUE: "...some of the streets, so."

"...Lincoln Avenue project all the way to the I-94 exchange that one could be starting any day. I don't have a date to share with you but we're going to be able to maintain traffic during the time of the project or hoping to at all times, but we asked for everybody's patience because that's a big stretch of road in a very busy road. We're getting closer on the Mount Faith project. A lot of progress being made there, I know we're fairly close to grading on some of the streets.

In area road construction, MnDot reminds motorists that they will encounter alternating lane closures in both directions on Highway 10 and Highway 59 in Otter Tail County starting today, as crews begin road preservation projects on both highways.

The work will start on Highway 10, east of Perham to Frazee, which includes the Highway 78 and County Road 80 exit/entrance ramps. Crews will be in this area for approximately two weeks, and will then switch to Highway 59, north of Pelican Rapids.

\$110M Bond Measure On Nov. 5 Ballot In Moorhead

(Moorhead, MN) -- A 110-million-dollar bond measure will be on the ballot this fall in Moorhead. The Forum reports the vote will be held on November 5th after action last night by the district. The vote on the bond measure will decide whether Moorhead High School gets a new performing arts center and some new parking lots. The number of students that could attend the high school would also increase if the bond is passed as it calls for the school to be expanded.

Fargo Pastor Takes Alcoholism Leave

(Fargo, ND) -- A Fargo pastor is taking leave to be treated for alcoholism. Pastor Kristopher Gorden asked the Eastern North Dakota Synod to be put on leave, after he was arrested at a Minnesota bar on suspicion of disorderly conduct. It happened at Izzy's Lounge in Warroad, Minnesota on Friday morning. Bishop Terry Brandt said he hoped Pastor Gorden's journey would give others the courage to seek treatment for alcoholism, according to the West Fargo Pioneer.

Burleigh County Can Fly Drones Over People

(Burleigh County, ND) -- The Burleigh County Sheriff's Department says it's been cleared to fly drones over people. The F-A-A approved the waiver on August 5th. The Burleigh County Sheriff's Department is the first agency in the state, and the second county law-enforcement agency in the nation, to be permitted to use drones to watch people. The drones will help with emergency response, tracking suspects, and documenting crime scenes.

Historic Grand Forks Bridge Collapses

07-23-19

An historic Grand Forks County bridge came tumbling down under the weight of a truck Monday. According to the Grand Forks County Sheriff's Department the truck was three times the weight limit for the crossing which spans the Goose River.

Authorities says around 1:15 p-m the driver - identified as Michael Dodds – drove a semi loaded with dry beans over the 1906 built bridge located one-and-a-half miles southwest of Northwood. The Sheriff's Office says the crossing was rated for 14 tons gross weight. Dodd's weight was over 43 tons. The bridge collapsed and the trailer became hung up on the west abutment. Dodds was not injured and received an overload fine of 11-thousand-400 dollars.

In a prepared statement the Sheriff's Office says the estimated replacement cost of the bridge is between 800-thousand and one-million dollars. The bridge was listed on the National Registrar of Historic places.

Due to the bridge being out Third Avenue Northeast is closed between 36th Street Northeast and 37th Northeast. The incident remains under investigation.

MnDOT reopens all lanes on Highways 55, 59 and 79 in Elbow Lake

07-25-19

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has reopened all lanes of traffic on Highways 55, 59 and 79. Since April, motorists have encountered alternating lane closures in Elbow Lake as part of a resurfacing and construction project.

As crews continue to complete final striping and other cleanup work under traffic, MnDOT urges motorists to slow down, eliminate distractions and drive with caution.

The project has been a collaboration between MnDOT and the City of Elbow Lake to address pavement concerns, pedestrian accessibility requirements, including sidewalk and boulevard improvements, as well as storm sewer upgrades.

Expect Slower Traffic on Highway 59 as WE Festers Arrive

07-30-19

MnDOT is asking motorists to watch for slow traffic at WeFest this year. The reduced 50 mph speed signs were placed Monday by MN DOT crews on Highway 59 in Detroit Lakes. They say If you're traveling to the Detroit Lakes area this week, expect delays due to event traffic.

Hawley Man Escapes Serious Injury In Crash In Lake Park

07-11-19

A Hawley man escapes ^{injury} serious injury in a one vehicle crash Wednesday night on Highway 10 in Lake Park. The State Patrol says just after 6pm a car was traveling east on Highway 10, West of 160th Avenue in Lake Park when it left the roadway, became airborne, traveled 90 feet and landed on the right shoulder of Highway 10 east of 160th Avenue.

Fifty-nine year old Keith Haats was transported to Essentia St. Mary's with non-life-threatening injuries.

Other agencies assisting at the scene included the Becker County Sheriff's Office, Audubon PD, Lake Park PD, White Earth PD, Detroit Lakes PD, Lake Park Fire Department.

Hawley Airport Crash

07-12-19

The pilot of a small ultralight aircraft is dead after crashing at the Hawley, Minnesota Airport.

Hero Bystander 14 SEC

OUTCUE: "...out of the aircraft"

Clay County Sheriff Mark Empting says the heroic bystander was treated for minor injuries and released at the scene.

The crash, on airport property north of Highway 10, was reported at about 12:30 Thursday afternoon. The Sheriff's Office and FAA are investigating.

Extreme Heat Buckles Concrete On Interstate 94 Near Moorhead

07-16-19

The extremely warm weather is blamed for buckled concrete on Interstate 94. MnDOT put up a temporary detour between exit 6 near Moorhead and exit 97 near Downer Monday afternoon due to road damage caused by heat stress. Officials say the road will re-open once the buckled concrete is repaired.

NTSB Releases Preliminary Report In Fiery Hawley Airport Crash

07-17-19

Federal investigators say a passing driver saw a gyroplane descend nose-down and crash into the ground at the Hawley, Minnesota Airport last Thursday afternoon. According to a preliminary report from the National Transportation Safety Board, the gyroplane crashed 300 feet from the departure end of the single runway. The plane started on fire shortly after the crash. The report says the passer-by on Highway 10 saw the crash, stopped and pulled the pilot from the burning wreckage. The passer-by suffered burns to his hands.

The pilot, now identified as 69-year-old Bradley Gibb of Vergas, was the only person aboard and died at the scene.

Fatal Motorcycle Crash Victim Identified

07-17-19

The Clearwater County Sheriff's Office identify the motorcyclist who died early Saturday south of Leonard.

The victim was 26-year-old John Louis Selmo of Solway.

First responders found him deceased roughly a mile and a half south of Leonard on County Road 2. Although they released his name, the sheriff's office still has not indicated what may have caused the crash, which was reported just a little after 3:30 a.m.

Motorcycle-Deer Accident Leaves 2 People Hospitalized

07-17-19

A man and woman are in the hospital after their motorcycle struck a deer in Motley Sunday afternoon. The 68-year-old driver and his 74-year-old passenger, both from Pillager, were on the trike motorcycle when the crash occurred just after 2:15 P-M. After the collision, the driver lost control and went off the road into some trees. The names of the two victims haven't been released.

Deputies Stop Runaway School Bus Near Granite Falls

07-19-19

Sheriff's deputies and a firefighter helped stop a runaway school bus after the driver had an apparent medical emergency in southwestern Minnesota.

There were no children on board and no one was injured when the bus went down the wrong side of the road on U.S. Highway 212 near Granite Falls. The Yellow Medicine County Sheriff's Office says it received several 911 calls about a bus crashing into vehicles. Deputies caught up with the bus, and Deputy Eric Diekmann drove in front of it with his squad car to warn other drivers. He used his brakes to slow the bus down.

Granite Falls firefighter Greg Meyer then jumped from his car, opened the bus door and put it in park.

The 70-year-old driver was taken to the hospital. His condition was unknown.

FAA Investigating Plane Crash Near Detroit Lakes Airport

07-18-19

The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating an airplane crash near the Detroit Lakes Airport. The Becker County Sheriff's Office 76-year-old pilot Theodore Kiebke attempted to land in a cornfield Tuesday night after the bi-plane's engine lost power. The airplane flipped onto its top. Kiebke was able to walk away from the crash and was speaking with first responders when they arrived at the scene. He was taken to the hospital with what appeared to be non-life threatening injuries. Kiebke was the only person aboard.

Crash Near Pelican Rapids Sends Three To Hospital

07-18-19

An early Thursday morning crash about 5 ½ miles southeast of Pelican Rapids sent three to the hospital.

A 17 year old male of Pelican Rapids driving a 2004 Chevrolet Trailblazer and a 2001 Ford F-250 pickup driven by an 18 year old Vergas man were both northbound near the intersection of County Highway 3 and Moonlight Bay Road southeast of Pelican Rapids at approximately 1:00am when the driver of Trailblazer attempted to pass the pickup at a high rate of speed.

The Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office says the vehicles collided at that point, causing the Trailblazer to drive into the westside ditch. The driver and two passengers in the Trailblazer, sustained non-life threatening injuries and were transported by Ringdahl Ambulance to Lake Region Healthcare and Essentia-Detroit Lakes. The two passengers in the Trailblazer were not wearing their seatbelts and the drivers of both vehicles were issued citations in the crash.

The Sheriff's Office says alcohol was not believed to be a factor in the crash.

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Highway 59 Road Preservation Project Prompts Lane Closures

09-05-19

Starting today, motorists will encounter alternating lane closures in both directions on Highway 59 north of Pelican Rapids as crews begin a road preservation project. The work is taking place from 460th Street to 470th Street between Dunvilla and Pelican Rapids, and is expected to be completed by Friday, weather permitting.

As part of this work, crews will start by milling off a thin layer of pavement before repaving the roadway. This preventative maintenance work will help extend the life of the road.

Flaggers will control traffic in the areas where crews are working. The Minnesota Department of Transportation urges motorists to always drive with caution, and reminds them to slow down in the work zone and never enter a roadway that has been blocked with barriers or cones.