

Transportation

Beginning today (MON) Minnesotans can obtain a driver's permit, license, or ID card without having to show proof of legal presence in the U.S. through the Driver's License for All law.

DVS spokesperson Carrie Buchholz (Buckles) says the first three steps to getting a driver's license are:

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[awdriversID2.mp3] :10 (THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS)

"Studying for the written test, making an appointment to take the test using our website, drive.mn.gov, and gathering the required documents."

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Buchholz (Buckles) says other things to know are that you need one primary and one secondary ID document or two primary ID documents from the standard documents list, the information you provide on your application will NOT be shared with state or federal agencies that enforce immigration law, and DL for All does NOT apply to REAL ID.

In an effort to address the pressing need for street resurfacing and reconstruction, the City of Fergus Falls is contemplating the implementation of a five percent franchise fee on utilities, specifically gas and electricity, for its residents.

The proposed franchise fee will not only help generate essential funds for street projects but also introduce a unique funding mechanism for the city.

Utility companies operating in Fergus Falls, including Otter Tail Power Co., Lake Region Electric, and Great Plains Natural Gas, would be required to pay this fee to the city for their use of public rights-of-way.

To recover these costs, the utility companies would have the right to pass the franchise fees on to their customers, which will be clearly listed on gas and electric bills as a "City Fee."

It is anticipated that the proposed franchise fee would generate approximately \$1.3 million annually, supplementing the existing budget for street projects.

For larger utility customers, a monthly cap of \$1,000 per account per utility ~~will be enforced.~~

While the concept of a franchise fee may be new to many Fergus Falls residents, it is worth highlighting that nearly half of the cities in Minnesota have already implemented similar fees.

You can find out more about the franchise fee proposal by going to [kbrf radio dot com](http://kbrfradio.com) and reading the story.

And if you have any questions, at 10 this morning News Talk 1250 KBRF, franchise fees will be the topic of today Real Talk with Mayor Ben. You can call in and ask the Mayor and City staff any questions you have. That's at 10 O'clock on News Talk 1250 KBRF

>>Patty Wetterling's New Memoir Comes out Tuesday

(St. Joseph, MN) -- A new book comes out today (Tuesday) about the nearly 27-year search for Jacob Wetterling. Patty Wetterling wrote "Dear Jacob: A Mother's Journey of Hope," with the help of freelance writer Joy Baker of New London. Wetterling says she held out hope that Jacob was still alive until his remains were recovered in September of 2016 near Paynesville. The book's overview says, "she finally tells readers what happened and shows how, in searching for Jacob, she found her purpose."

>>NTSB: Broken Rail Caused Train Derailment In Raymond

(Raymond, MN) -- The National Transportation Safety Board says a broken rail caused a train derailment earlier this year in Kandiyohi County. Nearly two-dozen rail cars left the track in Raymond on March 30th, causing a fire that led to the evacuation of around 800 people. Local officials said the damage caused by the derailment could have been much worse if it had happened farther east, where more homes and businesses were located. The N-T-S-B said the train was traveling below the speed limit for that section of track at the time of the derailment. It blamed the incident on a "rail head surface condition" that caused the rail to separate as the train passed over it.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is seeking public comments for their final site selection of a new rest area along Interstate 94 near Fergus Falls.

The proposed rest area will replace the closed rest areas at Hansel Lake and Lake Iverson.

The MnDOT Safety Rest Area Program determined the best spot for a rest area near Fergus Falls would be along Interstate 94, between mile marker 50 to 60.

MnDOT has narrowed that 10-mile stretch to three potential sites between mile markers 52 and 53, and a possible fourth site a few miles south of I-94 at mile marker 60 along Highway 59.

The new rest area is expected to be a Class 1 rest area, which is the largest rest area building, open 24 hours a day, and will include picnic facilities, lighted walkways, a tourism center, pet exercise area and a children's playground.

A final site selection report is expected before the end of the year.

>>16-Year-Old Injured in Vehicle Collision With Moose near Eveleth

(Eveleth, MN) -- A teenage girl is hospitalized after the vehicle she was riding in collided with a moose near Eveleth in northeastern Minnesota. The State Patrol says the car made direct impact with a moose on Highway 53 Saturday night and suffered heavy damage. The report says 16-year-old passenger Katelyn Johnson of Gilbert was taken to a Duluth hospital with non-life threatening injuries. Troopers say an S-U-V then hit the moose and another vehicle swerved into the ditch to avoid hitting the animal or other vehicles. No other injuries were reported.

>>Great Lakes Shipping Strike Ends

(Duluth, MN) -- A deal reached Sunday ends a week-long strike that had shut down a major shipping artery in the Great Lakes, halting the flow of grain and other goods from the U-S and Canada. Around 360 workers in Ontario and Quebec with Canada's largest private-sector union, walked out October 22nd in a dispute over wages with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp. Ships will start moving again this morning (Mon 7 am). The St. Lawrence Seaway and Great Lakes are part of a system of locks, canals, rivers and lakes that stretches more than 2,300 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the western tip of Lake Superior in Minnesota and Wisconsin. It carried over \$12 billion worth of cargo last year.

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In Fergus Falls ~~Thursday~~ morning, ~~October 5th~~, Vernon Ave will be closed from Union Ave. to Court St. beginning at 9 a.m.

Several diseased trees will be removed in that block.

The work is anticipated to take most of the morning to complete. ~~_____~~

Drivers will see signs for a detour following Washington Ave.

The Minnesota State Patrol is reminder drivers about a recent change to the state's Move Over law. Sergeant Troy Christianson says it previously required motorists to move over and slow down when a law enforcement or emergency vehicle was pulled over:

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[bpmnmoveover1.mp3] :14 "into 'em"

("But now it's expanded August 1st to apply to disabled vehicles as well. So if you're traveling a multiple lane road and there's a stalled vehicle on the right shoulder, you're required to move over one lane just to give them space to make sure that nobody runs into 'em.")

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Christianson says the change is in response to an increase in pedestrians being hit along the highway. He says drivers with a flat tire or car trouble should stay as far off the roadway as possible.

The City of Fergus Falls' public works department will be repairing a leaking water main on South Cascade St. on Thursday this week(November 2nd).

Barricades will be situated so people can still enter the Lake Region Health & Wellness Hub, (from the east/Vasa) and hospital *employees* can access the parking lots on the east side of Cascade.

Hospital and clinic *visitors* can enter the main parking lots from Vernon Ave.

Detour signs will be in place.

A map of the road closure is attached.

>>State Commission Picking 5 Finalists for State Flag and Seal

(St. Paul, MN) -- A state commission is expected to pick five finalists for the new Minnesota flag and seal today (Tues 1-9pm) from a list of more than 26 hundred designs. The Minnesota Historical Society's David Kelliher (KELL'-uh-her) says there's been of ton of interest in this process. He says they received about three thousand comments on website showing all the designs. Kelliher says Minnesota's new flag has received extensive state and national media coverage including an inquiry from Newsweek magazine. The designs include loons, the north star, pine trees, lakes, fish, blue sky, and the outline of Minnesota.

>>MnDOT Construction Season Included 227 Road and Bridge Projects

(St. Paul, MN) -- Mn-DOT's 2023 construction season is coming to an end. Spokesman J.P. Gillach (GIL'-latch) says crews worked on or completed about 227 road and bridge projects, and cities and counties worked on many more than that as well. He says, " this year's work created smoother roads, safer roads, and bridges. Worked on intersections, of course, improved accessibility." Some work zones around the state may remain active as work wraps up through November. Motorists should stay alert, watch for workers and equipment, and give workers room to safely complete their work.

Town Hall Meeting on Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail

(Duluth, MN) -- There's a virtual town hall this afternoon (Mon 3-3:30pm) on the planned "Northern Lights Express" passenger rail service between Duluth and the Twin Cities. The train will not be high-speed rail and state Senator Jen McEwen acknowledges, "re-establishing passenger rail back up at Duluth is sort of the first priority, but I think there are many people who would love to see a faster train." The state legislature in May earmarked about 195 million dollars, the necessary 20-percent local match to apply for federal grants. Opponents warn it will be another boondoggle like Northstar Commuter rail between the Twin Cities and Big Lake.

>>BBB Urges Minnesota Shoppers Use Caution on Cyber Monday

(Burnsville, MN) -- Minnesotans shopping online this Cyber Monday could become the targets of scammers or identity thieves. Bao Vang with the Better Business Bureau says to think twice before clicking on a social media ad because it might send you to an outside website. She says that site might look legitimate, but it's been set up to steal your money or if you buy a product it might never come, or it's going to send malware to your computer. Vang says Cyber Monday is great day to land deals but you need to use caution and do your research ahead of time.

>>Man Dead in Shooting Near Edina Mall

(Edina, MN) -- A man is dead after a shooting in an Edina strip mall parking lot. Police found a man with life-threatening injuries near the Galleria shopping mall around 9 pm Saturday. Despite life-saving effort, the man died at the scene. Officers say a suspect was arrested and that the suspect and victim are believed to have known each other.

>>Shipping Season Ends on Upper Mississippi River

(St. Paul, MN) -- The shipping season officially ends today (Mon) on the Upper Mississippi River. Liz Stoeckmann (STECK'-man) of the U-S Army Corps of Engineers says they're not shutting down boat traffic because of ice or cold weather. She says they're doing standard winter maintenance on locks and dams, so it doesn't affect the navigational season as far as barges and traffic going up and down the Mississippi River. Crews are doing concrete repairs at Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings and guide wall maintenance at Lock and Dam 3 in Welch and 7 near La Crescent. Last year's shipping season ended on November 29th.

The U-S Army Corps of Engineers is closing the books on the 2023 Upper Mississippi River shipping season. Lock and Dams chief Sam Mathiowetz (MATH'-oh-witz) says navigation numbers were similar to last year:

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[bprivershipseason1.mp3] :17 "have available"

("I would say it was a good season. I mean, the statistics they show that we were down below the ten-year average. But that's the way markets fluctuate. We don't control that. We provide a service, our users are there. What they have to ship to market and what the producers in the region have available.")

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The number of commercial vessels that went through Lock and Dam 3 near Red Wing increased by more than a hundred this year. Commercial lockages were down by six at Lock and Dam 5 near Winona, and off by 300 at Lock and Dam 7 in La Crescent.

With the first snowfall of the season in the books, another motorcycle season has drawn to an official close here in Minnesota. MNN's Tasha Redel has more:

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[trmotorcycleseason.mp3] :32 "WEARING A HELMET"

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2022 was the worst for motorcycle fatalities since 1985, with 82 deaths. We saw some improvements this year, with 65 motorcycle fatalities, which represents a 20-percent decrease from last year. Seventeen of the 65 fatal crashes involved excessive speeds, as high as 70 miles over the posted speed limit. Other factors included impaired and distracted driving, lack of protective gear, unendorsed ridership, and limited experience or lack of training. Forty-one of the 65 motorcyclists who died on Minnesota roads weren't wearing a helmet.

>>Motorcycle Fatalities Down Slightly in Minnesota

(St. Paul, MN) -- With the first snowfall of the season in the books, another motorcycle season has drawn to an official close in Minnesota. State officials say 2022 was the worst for motorcycle fatalities since 1985 with 82 deaths. We saw some improvements this year, with 65 motorcycle fatalities, which represents a 20-percent decrease from last year. Seventeen of the 65 fatal crashes involved excessive speeds, as high as 70 miles over the posted speed limit. Other factors included impaired and distracted driving, lack of protective gear, unendorsed ridership, and limited experience or lack of training. Forty-one of the 65 motorcyclists who died on Minnesota roads weren't wearing a helmet.

>>MnDOT to Start Sending Winter Emergency Alerts

(Undated) -- MnDOT will start sending text messages this winter to alert drivers to roads closed for more than four hours due to weather-related problems like snow, ice, flooding, or a major crash. The alerts will be sent to all phones within a one-mile band around the highway, beginning 10 miles ahead of the closure locations. The alerts will include a link to 5-1-1-MN-dot org, the state's online road information system.

>>Three Injured in Rollover Crash in Sauk Centre

(Sauk Centre, MN) -- Three people from Chicago, including a four-year-old, were hurt in a rollover crash in Stearns County Wednesday morning. It happened on Interstate 94 in Sauk Centre just after 8:00 a.m. The Minnesota State Patrol says an SUV was going east on Interstate 94 when the driver lost control on the icy road. Authorities say the vehicle went into the ditch and rolled over. The driver, 29-year-old Brandon Arias, and his passengers, 27-year-old Liliana Villa Senior, and 4-year-old Sebastian Arias, all of Chicago, were taken to Sauk Centre Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

>>Man charged for walking onto runway at MSP during busy travel day

MEDIA REFERENCE - 2ND LINE

(Minneapolis, MN) -- A Minneapolis man is charged with six misdemeanors after investigators say he climbed a barbed-wire fence and walked onto a runway at M-S-P Airport late last Thursday during one of the busiest holiday travel days. The Star Tribune reports 25-year-old Roel Blanco told officers he was not a ticketed passenger or airport employee and was trying to get to a gas station. In 2020 Blanco pleaded guilty to shoplifting charges in Anoka County, but there was an active warrant for his arrest for violating terms of probation.