

KKJM/Spirit 92.9 Issues & Programs
Q1 2020
News

1/2/20

Well now that it's the new year, we've only got nine months to comply with "Real ID" in Minnesota in order to fly or enter federal buildings. Starting in October, airport security, federal courthouses and military bases will no longer accept regular driver's licenses for entry. You'll need a passport, a REAL ID, or an enhanced ID. To apply for a REAL ID, you need to bring documents -- proving your identity, date of birth and legal status, your social security number and Minnesota residency to the DVS -- and then you'll need to be prepared to wait. Processing may take a month or longer.

Well the libraries in our area that are in the Great River Regional Library system are starting their annual winter reading program, it's called Snow Better Time to Read...it's designed for teens and adults and open to anyone in 6th grade or above and you can win some fun prizes for being a part of it...you can find out more at G River dot org.

And the Minnesota Golden Gophers football team started 2020 off right. They beat Auburn in the Outback Bowl yesterday 31-24. They finish the season 11-2.

1/3/20

The city of St. Cloud is hoping to improve some local roads, and the St. Cloud city council will likely ask the Minnesota legislature to approve a new half-cent sales tax to help pay for the projects. Voters WILL get a say in this...if the process continues this will show up as a referendum on the ballot during a general election.

If you are a veteran or if you know one who could use this, the Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity is looking for a veteran's family to move into a new home they're building. It's in Sauk Rapids and is around 1800 square feet with 6 bedrooms. The home isn't finished yet...they're slowing the process while they find a family to live in it. You can find out more at C M H F H dot org.

And here we go with the NFL playoffs...the Vikings are back in it after a one year break...they'll take on the Saints this Sunday at the Superdome in New Orleans. Kickoff is set for just past noon.

1/6/20

Pray for Australia if you think of it...they're battling the worst wildfires seen in decades, with large sections of the country [devastated](#) since the fire season began late July. A total of 24 people have lost their lives and thousands of houses have been destroyed. Rain last week helped, but with temperatures warming back up the fires could really take off again.

The flu isn't the only illness spiking right now.

Health experts are also seeing more cases of the respiratory virus RSV

The virus usually causes symptoms similar to a cold, but it can be dangerous for infants and older adults. The Minnesota Department of Health says at least 63 people were hospitalized for RSV last week. It's highly contagious. Doctors say it is critical to stay inside your home and wash your hands frequently if you or your child are sick.

And the Vikings proved a lot of people wrong yesterday in a thrilling win over the Saints in the playoffs...a touchdown pass from Kirk Cousins to Kyle Rudolph in overtime gave them the victory 26 to 20. They advance to the Divisional round, where they'll play the San Francisco 49ers this Saturday afternoon.

1/7/20

Please pray for a police officer who was injured last night in the line of duty in an incident with a suspect in Waseca, south of the Twin Cities. The Officer was flown by air ambulance to North Memorial Hospital in Robbinsdale, but their condition is not known at this time.

The St. Cloud City Council voted to raise parking fees in downtown St. Cloud during their meeting last night. It was a contested issue but ended up passing 4 to 3. Metered parking and ramp parking will now both be a dollar per hour, and contract parking cost will increase by 10 percent.

The Central Minnesota Builders Association Tools for Schools fund awarded 13 high schools in the area tools to help their trades programs. Their hope is that because of these opportunities more young people will start a career in the building trades after high school.

1/8/20

Iran launched a missile strike last night on two Iraqi bases known to house U.S. forces. It was a retaliatory strike after the U.S. took out Iran's top general last week. Indications are there were no U.S. casualties. President Trump plans to make a statement this morning.

The Pediatric Clinic in the CentraCare Health Plaza just finished a remodel. They wanted to make it more kid friendly with new interactive activities and new paint colors. This Saturday, kids can bring a Teddy Bear in to see what happens during a typical clinic visit. There'll be free teddy bears for the first 200 kids. It's this Saturday the CentraCare Health Plaza from 9 to noon.

A lot of people in the area were disappointed to find out Old Chicago has shut down permanently. A sign was put up yesterday saying they were closing their doors, but there were no details about why.

1/9/20

Well you've probably heard about police officer Arik Matson from Waseca who was shot in the line of duty earlier this week. His pastor gave an update on his condition and said that though he was gravely injured, he's improving with every hour, and better than what the doctors thought he would be or anticipated. The pastor went on to say that there's still swelling and there's a lot of things that will be made known as the swelling goes down. Their church is holding a night of prayer for him tonight.

During a week of tension between the U.S. and Iran, the U.S. Army is issuing a fraud alert after young adults across the country began receiving startling messages about a military draft. There have been several fake draft messages that have been sent to young people nationwide. If you or a loved one gets one of these texts, it's NOT real.

And the Central Minnesota Wellness expo is happening this Saturday at Crossroads Center from 10 to 4. There'll be speakers, fitness demonstrations, and over 100 booths, covering physical health as well as emotional and mental health. You can learn more at [Central MN Wellness Expo dot com](http://CentralMNWellnessExpo.com).

1/10/20

The Waseca community south of the Twin Cities is rallying together in support of Officer Arik Matson, who was shot in the line of duty earlier this week. They held a night of prayer for him last night, with hundreds of people gathering at his church. Officer Matson has movement on his right side and partial movement on his left. His wife Megan says he's getting stronger every day.

Well you've probably heard about the devastating wildfires in Australia. Literally billions of animals have died. Some local kids from the Boys and Girls Club of Central Minnesota decided to help with rescue efforts. They sewed animal rescue pouches that the Animal Rescue Collective requested. The pouches they made are being shipped to Australia today.

And tomorrow's a huge day for Minnesota sports fans. Kirk Cousins and the Vikings will take on the #1 seeded 49ers in San Francisco. Kickoff is at 3:35 tomorrow afternoon on NBC.

1/13/20

It was a scary situation in Sauk Centre yesterday when a man had a standoff with police for several hours after a domestic incident. Fortunately, police WERE able to arrest the man. He was taken into custody and charged yesterday afternoon.

Well with this being an election year, Minnesota has a presidential primary coming up pretty soon already...some people call it Super Tuesday, it'll be on March 3rd. The biggest change for Minnesota voters is our state moving away from the caucus system. According to the Minnesota Secretary of State, Minnesota will be the first to open voting to all voters in the presidential primary. Absentee voting for that starts this Friday.

And the Vikings season came to an end over the weekend. The San Francisco 49ers beat them 27-10 in the NFC Divisonal playoff game. The Vikings are also looking for both a new offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator...former offensive coordinator Kevin Stefanski took the head coaching job with the Cleveland Browns, and former defensive coordinator George Edwards is not expected to return.

1/14/20

Well because of that light snow we got overnight Sunday into Monday, there were 127 crashes statewide yesterday morning, as well as 66 vehicles that went in the ditch. With the snow we got overnight and more on the way this week, a good reminder to slow down and take it easy on these slicker than normal roads.

The Minnesota DVS couldn't process driver's license applications for several hours yesterday because of a nationwide outage. The system crashed a little before 12 noon yesterday, but they were able to get it fixed and it's back up and running for today.

In sports, the LSU Tigers are the college football National Champions...they beat Clemson last night 42-25 to claim the title.

1/15/20

The US House is preparing to vote to send articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the Senate today for a landmark trial on whether the charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress are grounds for removal. The vote will happen around midday.

Waseca Police Officer Arik Matson who was shot in the line of duty last week is progressing, but isn't out of the woods yet. His pastor posted an update that said Matson is able to reply to people with a thumbs up or by squeezing fingers. He's stable, but his condition remains critical. Please continue to pray for him and his wife and their two young kids. And if you're interested in helping their family financially during this difficult time, there's a GoFundMe set up for them.

Authorities are warning motorists about a phony law enforcement officer who is stopping drivers in northwestern Minnesota. This hasn't happened too close to us yet, but at least two incidents have been reported with a man in an unmarked white SUV with flashing, multi-colored lights pulling motorists over. The man is described as being in his late 20s or 30s, with a beard. If you're ever stopped by someone who won't display law enforcement credentials, you should call 911.

1/16/20

Minnesota-born National Guard Soldier Private Conner J. McGurran will be remembered today. He passed away at Fort Jackson in South Carolina last week....he was originally from Owatonna. They'll hold a memorial service for him today at Fort Jackson at 4 PM.

If you have money in a retirement account, you may be at risk. Financial advisors say hacks against 401K's and other retirement accounts are on the rise. To protect yourself, one expert recommends having good usernames and passwords, using multi-factor authentication on all of your accounts, making sure your financial advisor has a plan to protect your private information, and last but not least, don't fall for it if a person calls or emails you and tells you to take money out of your account.

1/17/20

Well a lot of local schools, including Saint Cloud, Sauk Rapids-Rice, and Sartell-St. Stephen are closing two hours early today because of the incoming winter storm, with all after school activities and programming cancelled. Over 100 schools statewide are either closing completely or early for the day.

Several airlines have issued travel waivers for people flying in and out of the Minneapolis St. Paul Airport this weekend. If you happen to be travelling today or tomorrow, you can check your airline's website to see if they have one of those.

And Sartell is bringing the ice INDOORS. The Sartell Youth Rec Center will be building a second ice rink next to Bernick's arena after a big donation from Regional Diagnostic Radiology came in. They're hoping to have the new rink up and running by next year.

Your good news story of the day happened with our neighbors up north in Canada. They had about a foot of snow covering Vancouver Island recently, and we know firsthand (and we're about to experience again) how hard it can be to get around when the weather gets like that. But these are also the times when you see people band together, and that's what happened on Vancouver island...over 100 people volunteered to drive their 4 wheel drive vehicles through the

snow to give doctors and nurses and hospital staff rides to work, so that they could get there safely and take care of their patients. Other people who may not have nice trucks are donating money for gas and giving banana bread. It's just a sweet example of using what we have to help others when the opportunity presents itself.

1/20/20

Today is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and so all state, county, and city offices are closed. There will be no mail today either. Many people use today as a day of service to honor Dr. King's legacy.

There were a whole lot of crashes this weekend on the snowy and icy roads. The Minnesota State Patrol reported 683 crashes between 5 AM Friday and 6 AM Saturday, and then another 514 crashes by 6 AM Sunday. There were also over 1000 spinouts or vehicles in the ditch over the weekend.

State Troopers across Minnesota will be carrying more than 600 kits to give to people experiencing homelessness who need clothes, food, and toiletries. The St. Cloud Times reports the Department of Public Safety collected donations and assembled them into "Care and Go" kits. They plan to have the kits ready by Feb. 1 and the goal is for every trooper to have one in their car. They include things like water, a protein bar, socks, t-shirts, toothpaste, and more.

1/21/20

It's a historic day on Capitol Hill, as the impeachment trial against President Trump gets underway, starting at Noon in the Senate. This is the third time in US history that a president has undergone an impeachment trial.

State recruiters are working to fill thousands of jobs needed to collect the 2020 census. The census is taken once every decade. This year, there will be an internet and phone survey option in addition to mail, but census workers are needed to follow up with anyone who doesn't respond. It's a part-time job that can pay up to just over \$27 an hour to go door-to-door collecting information on residents. You can learn more at [2020 Census dot gov](https://2020census.gov).

And if it feels like we've had a lot of snow so far this season, we are above where we typically are. We've had just over 30 inches so far. That's about 5 and a half inches above the St. Cloud norm.

1/22/20

Well as you know Minnesota is now a hands-free state after that new law started in August, and so far close to 10 thousand tickets have been issued for people violating it. It appears it's been a success so far, though...the Department of Public Safety says the number of distraction-related fatalities has decreased.

It was another successful year for the Charity Challenge, an annual event from The Norman C. Skalicky Foundation and the Central Minnesota Community Foundation that benefits local food shelves. They initiated the challenge just before Thanksgiving last year and matched every

dollar donated up to 150 thousand dollars. Well the totals are in and they ended up with over 568 thousand dollars. The money goes towards Catholic Charities, St. Joseph Community Food Shelves, and the Salvation Army.

And 5 Minnesota Vikings have been added to the Pro Bowl as replacements for players who couldn't make it. QB Kirk Cousins, defensive end Everson Griffen, fullback C.J. Ham, linebacker Eric Kendricks and cornerback Xavier Rhodes are all heading to Orlando, Florida for the Pro Bowl this weekend.

1/23/20

Minnesota's milk production industry continued to struggle in 2019, losing more than 300 net dairy farms for the second year in a row, according to the latest numbers from the Department of Agriculture. That's an 11% decrease. The U.S. as a whole has seen a roughly 30% decline overall [in the past decade](#), but one bit of encouraging news: Milk prices have inched up lately and reached their highest levels in five years at the end of 2019.

St. Cloud will hold a townhall meeting a week from tonight about extending the Northstar train service from Big Lake to St. Cloud. Department of transportation officials and engineers working on the project will be there, and you'll be able to voice any questions or concerns you have. It's January 30th at 6:30 at the Great River Regional Library.

And the Minnesota Wild emerged victorious last night...they beat the Detroit Red Wings 4 to 2. They're now 23-21-6 overall on the season, and now they're off for the all-star break until February 1st.

1/24/20

FedEx is warning customers about a text and email scam claiming to be from the company. The shipping retailer tweeted an alert this week about the hoax messages....they tell people that they have a package then give a link. FedEx says the messages are NOT from them and you shouldn't click on the link if you get one, just delete the message instead, and report it to FedEx.

The Sauk Rapids police department wants to equip its officers with body cameras, but first they'll hold a community meeting to hear from residents. They'll take questions and give information. They're hoping to have the cameras up and going by March. If you want to attend the community meeting on body cameras it's Monday at 5 in the Sauk Rapids City Council Chambers.

And the Vikings have a new offensive coordinator after the departure of Kevin Stefanski. They promoted Gary Kubiak. He was with the Vikings already in the role of Offensive Advisor, and previously spent time as a head coach of both the Houston Texans and Denver Broncos.

1/27/20

Tragedy in California yesterday as Kobe Bryant and his 13 year old daughter Gianna and 7 others lost their lives in a helicopter crash near Los Angeles. The chopper was flying in very foggy conditions but the cause of the crash remains unknown. Our prayers are with the families.

Well today is the first official day you can file your taxes. Of course you have between now and April 15th to get those done.

Well with the milder temperatures of late, you've probably noticed pothole season has started a little early in Minnesota. In possibly the most Minnesotan statement of all time, a MnDOT Spokesperson says they've been patching potholes when they have the time in between snowstorms.

1/28/20

There was some fear that the Coronavirus from China had reached Minnesota, but two possible cases in Minnesota ended up coming back negative, according to the Department of Health. There have been 5 confirmed cases across the US so far, none of them here.

Officer Arik Matson who was shot in the line of duty in Waseca continues to make progress in his recovery. A post on his CaringBridge site said he was scheduled to go in for reconstruction surgery yesterday afternoon. He also was able to participate in physical therapy and was able to put some weight on his legs as well as throw a ball twice. There is a GoFundMe set up to raise money for Officer Arik and his family as he continues recovering.

And there could be a local winner for this year's Minnesota Teacher of the Year. 6th grade language arts teacher Ashlee Johnson from Sauk-Rapids Rice is a candidate, as is Melissa Hammer from Royalton. A panel will name a group of semi-finalists and then finalists, and they'll announce the winner in early May.

1/29/20

An inmate at the Sherburne County Jail seriously injured a correctional officer, officials say. The incident happened on Monday and sent the officer to the hospital. He IS expected to make a full recovery. The suspect could face federal charges.

U.S. health officials are expanding screenings of international travelers for the Coronavirus. Screenings were initially done at five airports, nationally, but they've now expanded it to 20, including the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport. They do say though that the risk to Americans is very low.

The Minnesota State Patrol is reminding us not to use Cruise Control in the winter. They posted on their Facebook page about a driver this week who was using it, spun out on i-35 and went off a bridge. Fortunately, nobody was seriously injured, but the State Patrol says even though it's relatively warm outside and the roads look clear, using Cruise Control in the winter is not recommended.

1/30/20

Yesterday marked 24 years since Officer Brian Klinefelter lost his life in the line of duty in St. Joseph. They held a wreath laying ceremony at the spot where it happened and an honor guard stood watch for an hour.

The Minnesota State Patrol is reminding drivers to obey school bus stop-arm laws after 1,174 drivers were cited for violations in 2019. Though that's still too high, the number has dropped 25 percent since 2014. Minnesota law requires drivers to stop at least 20 feet from buses in both directions when the flashing lights are on and the stop arm is out. The fine for one of these violations is 500 dollars.

And the VEX Robotics competition is taking over the River's Edge Convention Center the next few days. 120 teams from elementary through high school will be building a robot to do a specific task. The competition starts this morning and goes through Saturday, and it's free to watch if you want to stop by.

1/31/20

Americans understandably have questions and concerns about the Coronavirus, some have even taken to wearing masks in public. But health professionals like Dr. Mark Schleiss of the University of Minnesota Medical school say that the risk to the general public is extremely low. Only 6 cases have been confirmed in the United States. Dr. Schleiss says you're much more likely to catch the flu than the Coronavirus.

Well they're saying this spring could see quite a bit of flooding. Our rain and snow totals from 2019 were well about the norm, and with the snow currently on the ground plus the odds being in favor of a wetter than normal February through April, there could be a significant flood

season. However, the National Weather Service says there's still a lot of time and factors that need to come together before we can tell what's going to happen one way or the other.

The Paramount Center for the arts in St. Cloud will be celebrating its 100th birthday next year, and they're hoping you might be able to help them out. They're looking for memorabilia from shows, whether it's a ticket stub, a playbill, a script, a family photo at one of their plays, a costume if you were in one. If you have something you think might qualify, you can get in touch with the Stearns History Museum, which is partnering with the Paramount.

2/3/20

Well if you're curious about the Coronavirus that's been making so many headlines lately, St. Cloud State University is partnering with Stearns County Public health and holding a seminar on it this week. They'll talk about how this happened, what the implications are, and what we can do to protect ourselves. It's on Thursday at St. Cloud State at 2 PM if you're interested in going.

Families in a Minnesota welfare program saw their benefits increase for the first time in 33 years as of Saturday. The maximum cash grant will increase by \$100 a month for participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program. The program provides temporary support and employment to more than 29,000 families with children per month who are experiencing poverty.

And the Kansas City Chiefs are Super Bowl Champions for the first time in 50 years. They beat the San Francisco 49ers 31-20 after a 4th quarter comeback last night. Quarterback Patrick Mahomes was the game's MVP.

You can learn life lessons anywhere if you're looking for 'em. I don't know if you watched the Super Bowl last night, the Chiefs ended up beating the 49ers, but it didn't look like that was gonna happen for a while. The 49ers were winning by 10 points, the Chiefs made a big mistake and turned the ball over in the 4th quarter, time was running out...I even said "It's over"...it looked like they were done. But they didn't give up. They kept working, they kept fighting, scored a touchdown, then another, then another, and ended up winning the game. And you probably see where I'm going with this. But I think sometimes we feel kind of like the Chiefs did...we're down, maybe we've just made a big mistake...and we feel like time is running out on us. And yet, we have a God who over and over and over again has brought his team to comeback victories. The biggest one defeating death itself after 3 days. And so if you're feeling down today, you feel like you're losing. Don't give up. God is with you, he's got this, and maybe your comeback is right around the corner.

If you've ever lost a pet, you know how hard it is. That's what David was facing. But it turned into today's good news story of the day. David's beloved dog Scout had cancer. Vets said Scout only had a month to live, and suggested that David put him down, but he refused to do that. Instead he took Scout to the University of Wisconsin school of veterinary medicine, and they were able to treat him and save his life. David was so grateful, that he decided to do something big. He owns a large company called Weathertech, and so he bought a Super Bowl ad, that you probably saw yesterday, to raise money for the veterinary school and its research. And hopefully more pets will live longer as a result. If you missed the ad, it's pretty cool, you can Google WeatherTech Super Bowl ad and watch it.

2/4/20

The State of the Union is tonight. President Trump will address the nation at 8 PM.

Officer Arik Mattson who was shot in the line of duty in Waseca last month continues to make progress in his recovery. He's out of intensive care and is now in a facility for longer-term care, according to a post from his sister-in-law.

And now that football season is over, baseball season is about to get underway. Single game Twins tickets are officially available now. You can buy them online at the Twins website and dream of warmer days. Twins Pitchers and Catchers report to spring training in Florida on February 12th.

How would you celebrate if you'd just had one of the biggest moments of your life? It involved a whole lot of dogs for one young man, and it's today's Good News Story of the Day. Derrick Nnadi plays for the Kansas City Chiefs, who just won the Super Bowl on Sunday. And of course he made confetti snow angels, celebrated with his teammates, but he decided to do something else to commemorate the win....his foundation paid the adoption fees for every single dog at a shelter in Kansas City. So people could come in and adopt those dogs for free, and that of course clears space for other ones to come in. That's a cool way to celebrate.

2/5/20

Well this year is a census year; in mid-March watch your mailbox because that's when you'll get your first reminder to fill out your Census form. This is the first year you can fill it out online, so you may not get the actual form by mail. April 1st is the official Census Day across the country. The Census is important because it determines how much Minnesota will get in federal funding for things like healthcare, schools and transportation.

On the heels of a January thaw, officials are warning us to be extra careful when venturing out on the ice. There's not nearly as much ice as there was at this time last year, and the quality of the ice may be weaker because of the thawing and re-freezing.

And you've probably noticed pothole season has started early this year. If you see a pothole that could damage a car, St. Cloud actually has a pothole hotline set up you can call to report it so that they can get it fixed...the number is 650 2949.

Sometimes social media gets a bad reputation for being a time-waster and a comparison trap, and just some other concerns that definitely are valid, but then you hear stories like this one where it was used for something awesome. This is today's good news story of the day. Katy is a mom from the UK, she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and last week, she had her final chemo treatment. And you know how it is when you're just bursting...you gotta tell people about something, so she went on Twitter and she said "I don't tweet often, I only have 12 followers, but today was my final chemo session and I want to tell everyone (well 12 people at least)." Well, she ended up telling a LOT more than 12 people. So many people were inspired by her tweet, and it started catching fire, and currently she's at close one million likes, almost 100,000 retweets, and more importantly people have been sharing their cancer stories, and sharing encouragement for Katie, telling her congratulations and to stay strong. And she was just totally

overwhelmed by the whole thing. That's the way social media SHOULD be used...for us to lift each other up.

2/6/20

The US Senate acquitted President Trump of impeachment charges yesterday. It brings to a close only the third presidential trial in US history. No president has ever been removed by the Senate.

The Benton County Sheriff's Office is warning people about a text message scam. This scam involves people getting a text that pretends to be from someone they know and says their loved one or friend is in trouble, and tries to get them to click a link or call a number. That can lead to personal information being stolen, so if you get one of these messages, police say delete it and block the number.

And St. Cloud is slightly above average for cost of living, according to the latest Cost of Living Index. St. Cloud's score was 101.4, the average is 100. In categories like housing and transportation, St. Cloud was below the average costwise, but above the average in groceries, utilities, and healthcare.

2/7/20

Thousands of central Minnesotans were without power for a couple hours last night. There was an outage that affected over 5000 people in St. Cloud, Sartell, Clear Lake, and Clearwater. It started a little after 5 PM and most people had their power back by 7:45. There's no official word on what caused it.

Today is National Wear Red Day. It's a movement started by the American Heart Association to support women's heart health. Heart disease is the #1 cause of death in women. February is also American Heart Month. Some ways you can help your heart health are to stay active and exercise, lose weight, make healthy food choices, stop smoking, and check your blood pressure and cholesterol.

Well if you want to vote in the Presidential Primaries in March, the deadline to register beforehand is this coming Tuesday the 11th. If you don't register by then, you CAN register on the actual day of the primary elections on March 3rd, but it's faster to do it beforehand. You can register online...all you need is your driver's license and the last 4 digits of your social security number...go to the Minnesota Secretary of State's website to learn more.

9-year-old Megan is going through the fight of her life, but she's got a whole lot of big brothers fighting with her. This is today's good news story of the day. Megan has a form of cancer called osteosarcoma. And next week she'll have surgery and start her 2nd round of chemotherapy. But she got to do something special to help keep her mind off the hard times. Megan has a bond with the Minnesota Gophers football team. Players and coaches have visited her in the hospital. And so she and her family planned a special movie night at a theater down in Plymouth to watch Frozen 2, and around 60 players showed up as well coach PJ Fleck and his wife. One of the players that came was Casey O'Brian. You may have heard about him, he's actually beaten the same form of cancer 5 times. And so she got to share that special movie night with them, and know she's not alone. She said "Casey, thank you for showing me how to fight cancer with a smile on my face. If you can do it, I can do it,"

She never even caught his name, but he made a world of difference in her son's life. He was an Amazon Prime Delivery guy. He had stopped by Ember's house to drop something off, and her son and his friends were shooting hoops in the driveway, so he stopped, shot a couple baskets with them, then went on his way. Well, the same delivery man came back an hour later with a brand new basketball, because he'd noticed the one the kids were using was worn out and going flat. What this delivery man didn't know is that Ember's son had had a really hard day at school, he had been dealing with a classmate who was being mean to him, and Ember said "You did what I tried to but couldn't. You turned his whole day around. Probably his whole week." And even though they never got this guy's name, his kindness with stick with her and her son for a long time to come.

2/10/20

There was a short police chase in Sauk Rapids over the weekend. Police spotted a stolen vehicle Saturday afternoon on highway 15 in Sartell. The suspect drove into Sauk Rapids, then got out of the vehicle and fled on foot. With the help of a K-9 unit, officers tracked him down and arrested him.

This is the week to take the plunge, the polar plunge that is. It's happening on Saturday on Pleasant Lake. Some local law enforcement officers will be part of this, and they're trying to raise money for the special olympics. Their goal is to raise 65 thousand dollars, and it's not too late to help! You can sign up for the plunge or donate. Find out more at Plunge MN dot org.

And the 2020 Minnesota Legislative Session starts tomorrow. The session is expected to focus on finding a compromise on a public infrastructure projects bill that would close the big gap between what members of each party want to spend.

2/11/20

If you're flying soon, be sure to get to the airport early. The Minneapolis/St. Paul airport was ranked the third worst airport for late travelers in the US. The study measured TSA wait times, the number of departing passengers, on-time departure percentage, and terminal square footage to determine the best and worst airports for late travelers, and MSP came in third to the bottom, so allow yourself plenty of time for your next flight.

If you travel on I-94 a lot, be prepared for some slowdowns this week. There are lane closures going on between Maple Grove and Clearwater from 6 am to noon through February 13th. They're doing this to prepare for construction on that stretch of highway that begins this summer.

And the new look Timberwolves are trying to get fans excited and packing the house for home games. Timberwolves players Karl-Anthony Towns and DeAngelo Russell both bought 1000 tickets to give away for tomorrow's game at the Target Center. The free tickets were snatched up almost instantly. There are still tickets available for purchase if you want to go to the game.

2/12/20

There was a power outage in Sauk Rapids yesterday afternoon that affected about 2000 people. It was caused by a small animal...they were able to restore power a little after 3 PM.

Thinking ahead to warmer days, Sartell is getting a splash pad. It'll be at Watab Creek Park and replace the wading pool. They're hoping to start construction in the spring and have it ready to go by summer.

The Wild won last night, beating the Vegas Golden Knights 4 to nothing.

2/13/20

The Minnesota Legislature just had their first 2020 session earlier this week, and they took a moment to honor the National Guard soldiers who lost their lives in the helicopter crash in December. They honored Chief Warrant Officer 2 Charles Nord, Chief Warrant Officer 2 James A. Rogers, Jr., and Warrant Officer Candidate. Kort M. Plantenberg

Well even though Coronavirus has been grabbing the headlines, medical experts say influenza is still the bigger threat. Some simple things you can do to help prevent it...common sense, but good reminders...get plenty of sleep, drink lots of water, try to avoid touching surfaces you don't have to, and of course wash those hands.

And the Timberwolves lost last night...they fell to the Charlotte Hornets 115-108. They have tonight off and then they're back in action tomorrow against the Celtics.

Today's good news story of the day is a continuation of yesterday. Yesterday we talked about Sophina, Sophina has such a big heart. She has down syndrome, and every single day she prays for first responders in Minnesota and across the country. She brings them homemade cookies when she can. And her birthday wish (her birthday is MArch 9th) this year is to bring something called a Life Coin to as many First Responders as possible. HSince these are such high pressure jobs and there's just so much hard stuff you see, first responders unfortunately are at high risk for suicide, and so Sophina wants to give them these life coins, because they have a phone number on them where First Responders can talk to someone completely anonymously, but someone who's been there, who has also been a First Responder, so if they're in a time of crisis they have somewhere to turn. So Sophina wants to give out as many of these as possible to First Responders in Central Minnesota. That's her birthday wish. And you can help! You go to the website Wrestling 4 Life dot org to learn more and donate. Wrestling the number 4 Life dot org. If you wanna hear a little more of Sophina's sweet story, go to our Spirit 92.9 Facebook page, and the link is there as well.

2/14/20

After filing for chapter 11 bankruptcy late last year, the chain of Granite City restaurants, including the original one in St. Cloud will have a new owner. The parent company of Famous Dave's is buying it. There are 25 Granite City restaurants in 13 states.

Earlier this week, the Sauk Rapids City Council approved the Sauk Rapids Police Department getting body cameras. There'll be a test period of 30 days and then all 17 Sauk Rapids officers will wear them.

If your kids are bouncing off the walls after being indoors for so long yesterday, here's a fun event. It's the ABC Kinder Olympix at the Whitney Recreation Center in St. Cloud. It's especially for kids 6 and under, it goes from 8:30 to 11:30 AM tomorrow and there's lots of fun activities: inflatables, arts and crafts, obstacle course, alphabet games, healthy snacks...and it's just 2 dollars per child or 3 dollars for a family. You can also donate a non-perishable food item for the food shelf and get a dollar off.

2/17/20

Fire crews have been battling a large fire at The Press in downtown St. Cloud. The call came in before 3 this morning, and crews from Sartell and Sauk Rapids were called in to help contain the blaze. They pulled firefighters out of the building because of structural concerns and started working to make sure the fire didn't spread to adjacent buildings. The cause of the fire is unknown, and no injuries have been reported so far. A number of roads are closed downtown because of this.

And the Minnesota Wild fired Coach Bruce Boudreau last week. In their first game with interim head coach Dean Evason they lost 2 to nothing against the San Jose Sharks. They're back in action Wednesday against the Canucks.

2/18/20

The Press in downtown St. Cloud is a total loss after the fire early yesterday morning. A number of other businesses in the area also have had to temporarily close because of all the smoke. A few roads in the area are still closed this morning as well. They're still working to determine what caused the fire.

And after all that, another fire broke out in Central Minnesota last night. This one was at the Northern Metals Recycling site in Becker. The fire started in a pile of crushed vehicles. Fortunately, no one was hurt and there was no building damage.

Some good news though, in case you missed it late last week...Minnesota Police Officer Arik Mattson, who was shot in the line of duty in January and gravely injured, is now up and walking with assistance. He had a personal best assisted walk of 50 feet last week, and though they say he's a long ways from walking on his own, it's a start.

2/19/20

We mentioned yesterday there was a fire at Northern Metals in Becker in a pile of crushed vehicles...it's been a tough task to try to douse that fire...they actually called in the National Guard to help, and as of last night were planning to work through the night on it. If you're in that area, you're advised to stay inside, especially if you have respiratory issues, because air quality isn't good right now.

This coming Monday, there's gonna be a community conversation about St. Cloud Tech High School. People will be able to ask questions about what's going on and some of the challenges the school has faced, including a big fight back in September. They're hoping to get feedback and see how it can be used to improve the school. It's Monday from 6 to 8 at the Tech High School commons.

And Governor Walz scheduled his state of the state address...it'll be next month, March 23rd to a joint session of the Minnesota State Legislature

2/20/20

The fire at Northern Recycling in Becker is still going, despite firefighters and various agencies working hard through the last couple of days. Investigators think it could last several more days. Officials continue to monitor the air quality. If you're in the area and you have respiratory issues, it's best to stay inside. They've also closed schools in Becker for the day.

If you're interested in becoming a storm spotter and learning more about severe weather, Stearns County Emergency Management is offering training in March. It's free, though you do have to pre-register. You can call 259-3940 if you want to learn more.

And a local student will be competing in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Ben St. Hilare is a 7th grader at St. John's prep who won the Multi-regional state spelling bee earlier this week in Fergus Falls, and now it's on to Nationals. They'll be televised on ESPN and ESPN 2 in May.

2/21/20

Well as the fire at the Northern Metals Recycling center in Becker continues to burn itself out, officials say early tests couldn't find chemicals in the air like sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide that would make people sick. They used handheld devices that can detect a lot of different potentially dangerous chemicals. The absence of them is of course a positive sign, though officials say it doesn't eliminate the possibility that they could still find chemicals in the air. They'll be running more tests today.

The deadlines to remove fish houses from Minnesota lakes are coming up in March, and the DNR is reminding people to pick up their trash. Litter left on frozen lakes can potentially affect the water quality. The DNR says that in recent years conservation officers have found propane canisters, blocking materials and more left on the ice.

And if you're looking for something to do this weekend, the annual Night of the Stars is going on tonight and tomorrow at the Paramount. Students from various schools in District 742 will show off their talent in a variety show. Proceeds help programs within the school district. You can find out more on the Paramount website.

2/24

Becker Police Chief **Brent Baloun** says that as of 1:30 p.m. Saturday the fire that started in a pile of crushed vehicles at Northern Metal & Recycling on

Tuesday morning was officially extinguished. The State Fire Marshal is still investigating the cause of the fire.

Special agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were in St. Cloud Friday to assist local and state officials to figure out the cause of the fire that destroyed the Press Bar and Parlor early Monday morning. Nearly 25 members of the bureau's National Response Team arrived in St. Cloud Friday at the request of the St. Cloud Fire Department and the ATF's St. Paul Field Division, according to a news release. The ATF has no timetable for completion of the investigation, only saying that it would be several days.

Some Minnesotans will see a \$2.25 check in their mailbox from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services division (DPS-DVS) in the coming weeks. The refund is being sent to Minnesotans who were charged a registration technology surcharge twice when they transferred their title and renewed their vehicle registration at the same time.

2/25

Both political parties will be holding Precinct Caucuses this evening in neighborhoods across Central Minnesota beginning at 7pm. To find one near you, visit

<https://caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>

An information session about Real ID will be held today from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Great River Regional Library in St. Cloud.

Staff from The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services division will be ready to answer REAL ID questions, and help you pre-apply.

Starting October 1st, you'll no longer be able to use your standard driver's license or ID card to board domestic flights or enter federal facilities. Instead, you'll need a REAL ID, enhanced driver's license or ID card, passport or passport card, or another acceptable form of identification for federal purposes.

Here's a sure sign spring isn't too far off now...The 48th annual Central Minnesota Builders Association St. Cloud Area Spring Tour Homes start this week. 27 homes built by 19 area builders will be on display this year this weekend and next. To find the homes look for a full-color guide at the area Holiday gas Stations. You can also download the Tour APP "Parade Craze," which offers photos and directions to each home or go to CMBAtour.com.

2/26

A fire in downtown Alexandria yesterday damaged buildings and caused some residents to be evacuated. The fire was reported about 5am yesterday morning at Raapers Eatery.

The St. Cloud City Council has approved the formation of an airport authority to operate the St. Cloud Regional Airport. The goal of the authority is to attract more air traffic and to be self-sustaining. The deal is subject to approval by the Federal Aviation Administration, which could take a year.

2/27/20

This afternoon, the Minnesota Department of Health will update the media on its plan for the coronavirus. Officials will also talk about how we can protect ourselves if the virus reaches Minnesota. There have been no confirmed cases here yet.

The REAL ID deadline is just months away, and less than 13 percent of Minnesotans are REAL ID compliant. Starting October 1st, you'll have to have a REAL ID compliant driver's license or a passport to get through Airport security. When you're applying for a REAL ID, here's what you have to bring:

- one document that proves your identity, date of birth and legal presence in the United States
- one document proving a social security number
- two different documents proving current residency in Minnesota

2/28/20

St. Cloud State University is closing down Sherburne Hall at the end of this semester. It's a dorm that's been around since the 60s, but of late has not been full.

Hopefully you've already done this, but if you still have a fish house out on a Central Minnesota lake, the deadline to get it off of that lake is Monday. Fish houses can be confiscated or even destroyed by a conservation officer if that deadline isn't met.

And for the second straight year, St. Cloud Cathedral boys hockey is headed to state! They beat Alexandria 8-1 last night to punch their ticket to the XCel Energy Center. The tournament starts this coming Wednesday, and they'll try to defend their State Championship from last year.

3/2/20

The fire at the press in St. Cloud from a couple of weeks ago has been ruled arson by authorities. The owner has been arrested. Investigators are not releasing any more information about the incident right now.

Well we've flipped the calendar to March, and it's colon cancer awareness month. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among men and women combined in the US, but 60 percent of those deaths could be prevented with screening. And so Centracare Health is offering a free take home screening kit for people 50 and older this month. You can get one at the Coborn Cancer Center, Coborn Healing Center, or St. Cloud Hospital pharmacy.

And it was quite the Leap Day for a few families in the area. 7 babies were born on Saturday at the St. Cloud Hospital....they're known as leaplings. They all got special onesies to commemorate the occasion.

3/3/20

Today is Minnesota's Primary Election, also known as Super Tuesday. If you're not registered to vote, that's ok, you can register at the polling place, just be sure to bring a document that proves Minnesota residency like a driver's license. You can find your polling place at MN Votes dot org.

Pray for our friends in Tennessee if you think of it. At least 7 people lost their lives after tornadoes touched down early this morning, including one that caused a lot of damage near downtown Nashville.

And Waseca Police Officer Arik Mattson who was shot in the line of duty in early January continues to make strides in his recovery. A CaringBridge Update said he's been working hard with his therapy, which includes occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy. His speech continues to improve, and he's also walking further and further with a crutch and two physical therapists, and there have been a number of other positive signs as well. The update says to see so many improvements in this short of a time period is nothing short of a miracle

3/4/20

Well the results from Super Tuesday are in...Joe Biden won Minnesota's presidential primary for the Democratic party, and Donald Trump won it for the Republican party.

St. Cloud State is temporarily stopping its study abroad programs due to the Coronavirus. March education abroad programs as well as any other school-sponsored international travel is suspended as of yesterday.

And if you're looking for something to do this weekend, Central Minnesota Idol is happening at the Paramount theater on Saturday night. Local performers will compete for the title of Central Minnesota Idol, but the event is also to raise money for the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota and organizations like Pathways 4 Youth, Project Astride, the Boys and Girls Club, and Terebinth Refuge. You can find out more and get tickets on the Paramount's website.

3/5/20

Secretary of State Steve Simon's Office estimates that over 885 thousand Minnesotans voted in the primary earlier this week. That's nearly triple the participation rate of the state's precinct caucuses in 2016.

Well with the 2020 Census just around the corner, the US Census Bureau has been trying to hire people to help, but they haven't hired as many temporary employees as they'd like so far, including in Minnesota. In Minnesota, you can make between 17 and 24 dollars an hour as a census worker. You can find out more at 2020 Census dot gov.

Another sure sign of Spring coming....the warming shelter at Lake George is now closed 'til next winter because of the warmer weather and bad ice conditions.

3/6/20

Well you've been hearing it all week, but Daylight Saving Time begins this weekend. We'll spring forward an hour at 2 AM Sunday morning.

Another fire in Central Minnesota...this one was at Dan and Jerry's Farm Range in Monticello yesterday. 4 greenhouses were affected...2 are considered total losses, the other 2 can likely be restored.

And after a dominating 11-2 victory over Mankato East in the first round of the boys state hockey tournament, St. Cloud Cathedral plays for their second straight Section A Championship appearance today. They'll take on perennial powerhouse Hermantown in the semifinal game at the XCel Energy Center, with the puck drop set for 11 AM.

3/9/20

The Minnesota Department of Health confirmed yesterday a second presumptive positive case of coronavirus in the state. The case is travel-related and involves a resident of Carver County

in their 50s who was likely exposed while traveling in Europe in late February. The patient is in isolation at home and recovering.

Sartell junior David Zhang won the Drake Physics prize for the second straight year. It's a rigorous test given to students in several different states, and the winner gets a full-ride scholarship to Drake University. David is the first student ever to win the award twice.

And St. Cloud Cathedral didn't repeat as State Champions in Boys Hockey, but they did win the third place game. They took down Warroad 6-4.

3/10/20

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport was named one of the best airports in North America for the fourth year in a row, according to the Airports Council International. Airports are scored based on customer surveys conducted at airports in 91 countries around the world

Minnesota-based Bluestem Brands has filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy. A chapter 11 debtor usually proposes a plan of reorganization to keep its business alive and pay creditors over time. Bluestem expects that its call centers and distribution centers will maintain normal business operations throughout this process.

If you want to learn more about severe weather, Skywarn Storm Spotter Training is this week...classes are tomorrow from 1 to 4 or 6 to 9 at St. John's University. They're free, but they want you to pre-register...you call 259 3940 for more information.

3/11/20

If you're flying out of the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport anytime between April and October, the Minnesota Department of transportation says you should allow for an extra hour to get to the airport. There's going to be a major road construction project nearby the airport that could lead to some long delays.

Congrats to the St. Cloud Tech Math Team...they won first place in the Class double A Minnesota State High School Mathematics League Championship. They beat Sartell by just 3 points to claim the victory.

And Minnesota Gophers men's basketball will try to keep their season alive today. They face off against Northwestern in the first round of the Big 10 tournament with tipoff set for 5 PM.

3/12/20

President Trump announced a 30-day ban on travel from European countries to the United States, beginning on Friday at midnight, in an attempt to keep new cases of Coronavirus out. The restrictions do not apply to travelers from the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, many other organizations are taking steps to try to curb the spread of the virus...Centracare announced they are no longer allowing visitors at hospitals including the St. Cloud hospital, long-term care facilities, and senior housing, the University of Minnesota is suspending in-person classes until at least April, the NBA is suspending its season until further notice, and the NCAA will play its division 1 tournament games without fans. The Johnnie/Tommy basketball game this weekend will also be played without fans.

The fire at the Northern Metal Recycling Center in Becker from last month has been ruled accidental. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but it burned for 3 days before firefighters were able to put it out.

And if your green thumb is getting itchy with spring closing in, the city of Sartell is selling plots of land in their community garden. The plots cost 25 dollars each. There's more information at Sartell MN dot com...just search for community gardens.

3/13/20

Plenty more event cancellations because of COVID-19, including the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments. As far as schools, the Minnesota Department of Public Health has not recommended cancelling classes, but they are asking schools across the state to take measures to prevent the spread of the virus by social distancing. St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, and Sartell are canceling big gatherings and banning visitors, though beginning and end of day drop off and pickup routines won't change.

Meanwhile the Mayo Clinic has developed a test to detect the Coronavirus. Their laboratory president says the test should ease the burden on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as state public health laboratories.

Well the upper midwest WAS at a major to moderate flooding risk, but because of the drier weather, the National Weather Service says that's decreased. There is still the possibility of minor to moderate flooding.

3/16/20

The CDC issued a recommendation last night that gatherings of 50 or more people should be canceled or postponed throughout the country for the next eight weeks. That's Because large events can fuel the spread of Covid-19. It added that, at any event, proper precautions should be taken, including making sure people are washing their hands and not getting too close.

And on that note, Governor Tim Walz has signed an executive order that authorizes the temporary closure of Minnesota K-12 public schools to students, effective Wednesday. Of course locally, St. Cloud, Sartell, and Sauk Rapids schools are closing as of today. Child care centers, including school-based child care centers and daycares will remain open, and The executive order requires schools to provide care for elementary-age children of health care

professionals, first responders, and other emergency workers during previously planned school days.

3/23/20

The St. Cloud Hospital is reminding us that the Emergency Room continues to be for emergencies only. They've seen a big uptick in people coming in who don't have urgent needs, but who think they may have COVID-19 because of minor symptoms. You shouldn't go to the ER unless you have struggles breathing or are in a very high-risk situation like a history of lung disease. What you can do is call a nurse at 320 200 3200 and talk to them.

And power was out for about 2000 X-Cel Energy customers yesterday in East St. Cloud because of some downed powerlines. It was restored around 9:30 PM last night.

Today's good news story of the day is about a couple who made the best of the current tough situation. Their names are Tony and Annie, and their plan was to get married this past Saturday at a chapel on the University of St. Thomas...this had obviously been in the works for months, they were going to celebrate with 160 of their friends and family. But because of COVID-19, they finally realized a week before their big day...wow, this may not happen. It was hard...there were tears, but they decided to make the best of it...Tony, a week ago Monday, hatched a plan...he told Annie that afternoon "Let's get married tomorrow." And so on a very not typical Tuesday, Annie walked down the aisle, flanked by empty pews, and they got married with her parents as witnesses. "People are going through so much worse during at this time than us. I think it puts things in perspective." She said it'll be a great story to tell their kids and grandkids someday. They've already re-scheduled their reception for later this year, and she says it'll give them more time to practice for their first dance.

3/24/20

Gov. Tim Walz says he is not ready to issue a shelter-in-place order in Minnesota but "very well soon could be." Walz addressed the media from his home yesterday, where he is self-quarantining after someone on his security detail tested positive for COVID-19.

Crossroads Mall in St. Cloud has temporarily closed as of last night. Essential stores and restaurants with exterior access are allowed to stay open.

St. Cloud's School District 742 is continuing to help keep students fed while school's out...and they're expanding. They already had grab and go sites at some elementary schools, now meals will be delivered by school bus near all area elementary schools. The meals are free for district 742 students...though of course the district is encouraging the continued practice of social distancing when picking up the meals. You can see the delivery schedule on district 742's website.

3/25/20

Gov. Tim Walz says he has his first evidence that the social distancing and other measures Minnesotans are taking to slow the spread of COVID-19 are working "a little bit." Walz said that there is some quantifiable data that these efforts so far are working to "flatten the curve." Walz still says he is not ready to issue a "shelter in place" or "stay at home" order [like Wisconsin did](#) yesterday, and several other governors have done. He said he'll make a decision based on the data he's getting from researchers, and that such an order doesn't automatically mean the virus will be stopped.

The governor stood by a comment he made Monday, that 40 to 80% of people will get coronavirus at some point. He said any mitigation measures, including shelter in place, would be aimed at slowing that spread down so that hospitals don't get overwhelmed.

If you're a small business owner, the city of St. Cloud put together a website to help local businesses affected by everything happening. It has links to everything from commonly asked questions to how to file for unemployment insurance. It's on the city of St. Cloud's website...just look for covid 19 business resources.

3/26/20

Governor Walz issued a Stay at Home order for two weeks. It starts tomorrow night at 11:59 PM and goes through April 10th at 5 PM. We'll still be able to do essential activities like getting food and gas, taking care of family members, etc...we'll also still be able to go outside as well. We just won't be able to socialize or gather in groups and in some cases go to work. We have a more comprehensive list of things you can and can't do under this order on our Facebook page.

We know a lot of people have been hurt financially by this...the US Senate passed a relief bill yesterday in an effort to help...it includes sending 1200 dollars to most Americans, as well as expanding unemployment benefits. The bill still has to be voted on in the House before it can move forward.

3/27/20

The US House is likely to pass the Relief Bill today that was unanimously approved by the Senate earlier this week. President Trump marveled at the unanimity yesterday and is eager to sign the package into law. The relief bill will send 1200 dollars to most Americans and will also give support for struggling businesses.

The deadline to get a REAL ID has been pushed back a year. Originally the deadline was supposed to be October 1st of this year, but with everything happening it's been changed to October 1st of 2021.

3/30/20

President Trump is extending the voluntary national shutdown for a month. The initial 15 day social distancing period expires today, but the president extended it through April 30th.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development announced new rules for applying for unemployment. Because of how many people have been applying, applicants are asked to apply on certain days based on the last number of their social security numbers. On Mondays, 0 1 and 2 can apply, 3 through 5 on Tuesdays, 6 through 9 on Wednesdays, and any number can apply on Thursdays and Fridays.

3/31/20

Police Officer Arik Mattson from Waseca who was shot in the line of duty in January will fly out of state this week to continue his recovery...His sister-in-law, Nicole, says the facility Matson is currently staying in does not have the ability to provide the care he needs and that he's excited about the move.

Calling the shortage of personal protective equipment a "huge problem," Gov. Tim Walz said yesterday that front-line workers must have adequate amounts of masks, gloves, gowns, and other resources in the coming weeks. Walz said it's their commitment to get protective equipment into the hands of the frontline workers.