

News Topics

10/1/20

The Minnesota State High School League is meeting this morning to discuss the future of high school sports this winter, and to make plans for fall sports playoffs.

They closed last year, and now the former Shopko West building in St. Cloud will be torn down. No word yet on future plans for the property.

And unfortunately the Twins are out of the playoffs after falling to the Astros 3-1 yesterday.

10/2/20

President Donald Trump said early this morning that he and first lady Melania Trump have tested positive for the coronavirus. The president's physician said in a memo that Trump and the first lady "are both well at this time" and "plan to remain at home within the White House during their convalescence."

After meeting yesterday morning, The Minnesota State High School League (MSHL) has set the start dates for winter sports. The board approved a plan they called a "maximized schedule" that has 70% of the competitions a regular winter season would have.

And after closing down for a couple weeks, Pleasantview Elementary School in Sauk Rapids will re-open for in-person learning Monday. Sauk Rapids High School and Middle school will continue doing hybrid learning until October 16th.

10/5/20

It's always a good day to thank a teacher, but maybe a little more so today, it's World Teacher's Day. The day provides the chance to celebrate the teaching profession worldwide, recognize achievements, and draw attention to the voices of teachers.

It's also Fire Prevention Week. This year's theme is Fire Safety in the Kitchen since cooking is the #1 cause of home fires. Also a good reminder to check your smoke detectors and put fresh batteries in them.

And the Vikings got their first win of the season yesterday...they toppled the Texans in a close one...31-23. They're now 1-3 on the year.

10/6/20

Just a head's up that a good chunk of Central Minnesota is under an elevated fire risk today because of low humidity and high winds. The National Weather Service asks us not to do any burning today.

If you have a teen in your house who's working towards getting their learner's permit to drive, they'll be able to do it online. Starting this Thursday, the knowledge test will be available for people to take online at home with a parent, guardian or adult (21 or older) monitoring the test.

Sauk-Rapids Rice announced both the high school and middle school will stay in a hybrid learning model until further notice. It was originally set to continue through next Tuesday.

10/7/20

Since a lot of people are voting absentee this year, Stearns County has set up a drive thru ballot drop off area. It's outside the Stearns County Service Center in Waite Park, and it's open Monday through Friday from 8 to 4:30.

If you want to get a free COVID-19 test, the Minnesota Department of Health is offering free testing today and tomorrow at Clemens Field House at the College of St. Benedict. It's happening from noon to 6 and you can preregister for a time slot to avoid waiting.

Vikings fans will have to wait at least a few more weeks before watching their team play in-person. Fans will not be allowed to attend the Vikings home game against the Falcons on October 18th. Team officials say they are working with local officials to hopefully bring back fans later this season.

10/8/20

The St. Cloud school board has decided that 6th through 12th grade students in district 742 will move to distance learning because of rising COVID cases. They'll start transitioning to the new learning model on the 14th, and be fully online by Monday the 19th.

Meanwhile enrollment is down in district 742. 37 percent of the decrease is in early childhood, and the district speculates that due to the pandemic, families are choosing other schooling options.

Dry weather and drought across Minnesota have created conditions favorable for wildfires this fall. The Minnesota DNR urges homeowners, woodland owners, farmers and outdoor recreationists to monitor statewide fire danger and current burning restrictions, which can fluctuate quickly this time of year.

10/9/20

There'll be free tests for COVID-19 next week at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud. It'll be Tuesday through Thursday from noon to 6...you can get tested whether you have symptoms or no symptoms. You can find out more and schedule an appointment on the Minnesota Department of Health's website.

The Minnesota Department of Education has unveiled new guidance that will allow a limited number of spectators for high school sports, concerts, performances and other events, including

those held indoors. They recommend no more than two spectators per participant, and to limit total attendance based on the size of the venue and the overall state guidance for indoor and outdoor gatherings.

And there's also new guidance for restaurants...since June, they've only been able to seat 4 people to a table, or 6 if they're from the same household...now in dining rooms they'll be able to seat parties of up to 10 people, whether or not they're from the same household.

10/12/20

Confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett are set to begin today.

The rain last night in St. Cloud was record-setting...we officially got 1.11 inches, the most we've ever had on October 11th...that breaks a record that was almost 50 years old.

In sports, the NBA crowned a new champion yesterday as the Lakers beat the Heat 4 games to 2. And the Vikings played a great game but fell just short against the Seattle Seahawks last night, 27 to 26. They're now 1-4 on the year.

10/13/20

Minnesota health officials announced new visitation guidelines for nursing homes and other assisted living facilities. They'll be broken down into 3 categories...low risk, medium risk, and high risk. These are determined by the county's two-week COVID-19 test-positivity rates. The Department of Health says low-risk and medium-risk facilities should allow in-person visits as long as they haven't had a COVID-19 exposure from a positive resident or staff member in the last 14 days.

Catholic Community Schools announced they'll continue the in-person learning model for the time being.

And just a reminder to pray for and support our teachers, a new survey of over 10 thousand Minnesota teachers and administrators found that nearly 30% of them are thinking about quitting or retiring due to the stress, workloads and health risks stemming from the pandemic.

10/14/20

A wildfire that burned for nearly three hours just north of Duluth has been extinguished. It grew to more than 20 acres in size, and crews even had to evacuate some homes. Investigators say it was caused after a branch fell on a power line.

Before you buy more hand sanitizer, may wanna check out this list from the FDA...they've now listed 202 hand sanitizers to avoid because they may contain toxic ingredients or have less than the required amount of approved ethyl or isopropyl alcohol. You can learn more on the FDA's website.

The Minnesota Gophers first football game is a week from Saturday against Michigan at TCF Bank Stadium. They'll be letting a small number of fans into the game...about 800...family and friends of players.

10/15/20

The Minnesota State Demographer is urging people to make sure they're counted before the 2020 census ends today. The census helps determine federal funding and congressional representation. You can take the census online at 2020 Census dot gov.

The Minnesota house passed a bonding bill last night that'll help fund some local projects. It was a 1.9 billion dollar bill...and it'll bankroll updates to St. Cloud State University, the MAC, the St. Cloud correctional facility, and the Foley Wastewater Treatment plant.

The St. Cloud Tech varsity and JV football teams are under quarantine after a positive COVID test. Their game that was scheduled against Monticello tonight is cancelled.

10/16/20

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule is now in effect. It offers protection from utilities being shut off for residential customers experiencing difficulty paying their utility bill between October 15th and April 15th. As long as you contact your natural gas utility and set up a payment plan, your service cannot be disconnected.

Sartell city officials distributed nearly \$1-million to several local businesses on Wednesday. The funding was made possible through Sartell's Small Business Relief Program. Nearly 70 Sartell businesses applied for the grant program and received a check to help cover expenses brought on by COVID-19.

The Atlanta Falcons have shut down their team facilities due to 'multiple positive COVID tests.' The Falcons are scheduled to play against the Vikings at US Bank Stadium on Sunday. There is a possibility that the game could be rescheduled to Monday or Tuesday.

10/19/20

If you see flags at half-staff today, it's to honor those who have lost their lives to COVID-19. That's happening the 19th of every month through the end of the year.

Longtime Minnesota sports journalist Sid Hartman passed away at age 100 yesterday. He covered Minnesota sports for nearly 75 years.

The Vikings had a tough game yesterday...they fell to the Falcons 40-23, dropping their record to 1-5 on the year. They'll play again in 2 weeks after their bye.

10/29/20

Sauk Rapids Rice Middle School is moving to distance learning for the time being. The school will be closed today to give time for preparation, and then distance learning will start tomorrow and go through November 11th.

Clearview Elementary in St. Cloud will also be temporarily distance learning...that's in effect for the next few days...they'll be back in person on Wednesday the 4th.

If you need to get tested for Covid, a semi-permanent testing location just opened at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud. The tests are free, they do have some walk-in times available or you can make an appointment online.

10/30/20

In a ruling yesterday, the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered absentee ballots arriving after Election Day to be separated and potentially removed from the final vote totals, depending on future court rulings. The ruling casts doubt on whether absentee ballots received after Nov. 3 will be counted, despite a state plan to continue to count absentee ballots received within seven days of the election

Toys for Tots is starting their annual campaign on Sunday...there'll be hundreds of collection locations around Central Minnesota. Last year they gave out over 11 thousand toys.

And St. Cloud's Apollo High School is turning 50 years old this year...they wanted to do an in-person event to celebrate, but with the pandemic have decided to an online event to commemorate 50 years...that starts at 7 tonight on St. Cloud District 742's Youtube page.

11/02/20

Rice Elementary School and Rice Early Childhood Education will move to full-time distance learning, according to the Sauk Rapids Rice School District. The switch is due to a staffing shortage caused by Covid Cases.

Election Day is tomorrow and Early Voting is at an all time high in Minnesota...as of yesterday, there were still around 293,000 outstanding absentee ballots, according to Secretary of State Steve Simon. If you still have a ballot, he's advising you not to mail it at this point, but to hand deliver it to your county election office or designated dropbox by 3 PM tomorrow.

And the Vikings had a big win yesterday over the Packers in an upset...they won 28-22. They're now 2-5 on the year.

11/03/20

Of course today is Election Day. Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon put out a reminder to verify your polling location...some locations have changed due to the pandemic. You can find your polling place by visiting the secretary of state's website.

St. Cloud's Talahi Elementary School is the latest to move to a distance learning model. That's in place starting today through November 13th.

And while today is gonna be beautiful, thinking back to the October snow, we did officially set a record. We had 7.8 inches of snow, breaking the old record by well over an inch.

11/04/20

Still too early to call for the presidential race...President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden are battling for three familiar battleground states — Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania — that could prove crucial in determining who wins the White House. It's unclear when or how quickly a winner can be determined.

In St. Cloud Mayor Dave Kleis won his re-election bid.

And after record snowfall last month, yesterday was a record high in St. Cloud...it climbed all the way up to 74, tying a record from the 1970s.

11/05/20

Still no official word in the Presidential Race...as of earlier this morning, Challenger Joe Biden had 264 electoral votes and President Donald Trump had 214. 270 are needed to win.

Pre-K through 5 students at all St. Cloud Schools will be switching to distance learning at the end of this month. There'll be no class November 23rd through 27th as staff prepare for this, and then November 30th will be the first day of distance learning. They're looking to go back to hybrid learning January 4th.

And yesterday was record-setting yet again in St. Cloud. The 75 degree high broke the previous November 4th high by 3 degrees...that's the second day in a row of record-breaking temps.

11/06/20

Americans enter their third full day after the election without knowing who will serve as president for the next four years. Still no official word as a number of hotly-contested states continue to count votes.

Another local school is moving to a distance-learning model...Mississippi Heights Elementary in Sauk Rapids...that goes into effect next week through the end of November.

And hard to believe with how nice the weather has been, but it's the Firearms Deer Hunting Opener tomorrow. They're expecting 500 thousand hunters in Minnesota this year.

11/09/20

Joe Biden is the projected winner of the 2020 Presidential Election. Current president Donald Trump's campaign said it would seek a recount in Wisconsin and is filing lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia. Election officials in Georgia said there would be an automatic recount there because the race is so close.

Longtime Jeopardy Host Alex Trebek passed away yesterday after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 80 years old.

And the Vikings won their second consecutive game yesterday, beating the Lions 34-20. They're now 3-5 on the year.

11/10/20

It wasn't record-setting, but a lot of rain in St. Cloud yesterday...1.44 inches officially.

Sartell schools are switching to distance learning...Sartell High School, Middle School, and Riverview Intermediate will move to distance learning Monday of next week and go through December 4th.

And if you get a text message about a stimulus check, it's a scam...the IRS says people are getting texts that tell them they'll get a stimulus payment but that they need banking information. But the IRS doesn't communicate through texts, so if you get a message like that, don't click on it. You can screenshot it and report it to Phishing@IRS dot gov.

11/11/20

Governor Tim Walz announced some new dial-back measures to help curb the spread of Coronavirus...restaurants and bars will have to end dine-in service between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m., effective Friday, social get-togethers are limited to 10 people or less and three households or less, including the host, also effective Friday....and as far as weddings and funerals, there'll be no change to the actual ceremony - but the receptions afterwards will be limited to 50 people starting November 27th and 25 people on December 11th.

Several inches of snow fell across Central Minnesota, and the Minnesota State Patrol posted some commonsense winter driving reminders: Slow down, increase your following distance, headlights should be on and cruise control off, and of course give those snowplows room.

And Mayor Dave Kleis announced a Veteran's Day parade today...it's at 11 AM in downtown St. Cloud. And at the end there'll be a small ceremony rededicating the Veteran's Memorial at Wilson Park.

11/12/20

Yesterday was Veteran's Day and there's a virtual job fair coming up for veterans...it's a week from today...November 19th, with over 100 employers who recognize and appreciate military experience. You can learn more at Career Force MN dot com.

Something fun to mark on your calendar that's happening in a couple weeks...it's a Christmas Drive Thru Event at Valleyfair's parking lot in Shakopee...it's called Christmas in Color, a mile-long path featuring more than a million music-synced lights. You can find tickets at Animated Color dot com.

And the Vikings announced they won't sell tickets for any of their remaining four home games. They've been talking all year with stadium, state and city officials about devising a way to safely and responsibly open the gates but have decided not to pursue that any more.

11/13/20

It was quite a scene on I-94 near Monticello yesterday....weather conditions suddenly took a turn for the worse and there was a 29 vehicle pileup, half of those were semis. 9 people were taken to the hospital with what appeared to be minor injuries, and crews worked to put out several vehicle fires.

If you or someone you know is looking for a job, career solutions will be at the St. Cloud Public Library this afternoon. You can get help with things like interview skills, your resume and cover letter, and online job searches. It's free, and you can walk-in anytime between 2:30 and 4:30 today.

And it's Friday Night Lights for the Minnesota Golden Gophers football team at TCF Bank Stadium...they'll take on Iowa...kickoff is set for 6 PM.

11/16/20

If you're COVID-19 positive or were exposed to someone who tested positive, starting today you may receive a text message asking you to answer the call, saying that state and local public health department staff will be calling you and giving you the number they'll be calling from. They're doing this in order to get a better response for contact tracing.

Because of rising Covid cases, Waite Park is closing city facilities until at least December 1st. You'll still be able to call and email city employees.

And the Vikings are on Monday Night Football tonight...they're looking for their 3rd straight win as they take on the Chicago Bears. Kickoff is set for 7:15.

11/17/20

Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner, Jan Malcolm, said the record surge in COVID-19 cases in Minnesota has already resulted in a record 15,000 hospitalizations from the virus, and she said they could double or triple in the coming weeks. Healthcare workers are urging Minnesotans to take this seriously.

The Vikings got their third straight win last night...they beat the Bears 19-13 to improve their record to 4-5.

And the annual Country Lights Festival in Sartell is still on...they'll be taking safety measures but you'll still be able to walk through thousands of lights starting December 1st.

11/18/20

Governor Tim Walz will make an announcement tonight about new restrictions meant to curb the rapid spread of COVID-19. While not releasing details, the governor said the announcement will affect high school football and volleyball playoffs, and reportedly a number of other things as well. The announcement comes at 6 this evening.

The FDA has allowed emergency use of the first rapid [coronavirus](#) test that can be performed entirely at home and delivers results in 30 minutes. The test will require a prescription, likely limiting its initial use.

Well if you're in St. Cloud and you still have some leaves or other yard waste to get rid of, just a head's up that this Saturday is the last day the compost site in St. Cloud will be open for the year, and Monday is the last yard waste collection day.

11/19/20

As COVID cases continue to surge, Governor Walz announced new restrictions that go into effect just before midnight tomorrow and last for 4 weeks. This will put a pause on all in-person dining at restaurants, all social gatherings with individuals outside your household, both youth and adult organized sports, Gyms and fitness centers, Recreation centers and public pools, Indoor entertainment venues, as well as Wedding receptions and private parties. Retail businesses, salons and places of worship will remain open with proper precautions in place. Childcare will also remain open.

Today is Give to the Max Day...a chance to donate to local charities and nonprofits. Throughout the day, Give MN presents bonus "Golden Tickets" to organizations, worth between 500 and \$1,000 dollars, and a grand prize 10 thousand dollar bonus at the end of the day. The bonuses are added onto a donation. You can even give to Spirit 92 point 9 through this website if you're interested...it's at Give MN dot org.

And a little bit of good news....the Charlie Brown Holiday specials are gonna be shown on broadcast TV after all...for a while it looked like they weren't since Apple bought the rights to them, but after a huge backlash, they announced they're teaming up with PBS for ad-free broadcasts of "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" (on Nov. 22) and "A Charlie Brown Christmas" (on Dec. 13).

11/20/20

If you saw pictures of buildings glowing purple last night....Landmarks across Minnesota were lit up in purple to recognize Minnesota's frontline workers, and honor the more than 3,000 Minnesotans who have lost their lives to COVID-19.

The CDC is recommending Americans don't travel for Thanksgiving amid the rise in COVID cases.

And a number of local high school football teams who were scheduled to play Saturday have switched their games to today because of the pause on high school sports starting late tonight. Albany will play Pierz, Rocori will play Grand Rapids, and Sartell will play Bemidji.

11/23/20

If you're sending gifts for the holidays this year, might want to get a head start. Despite added staff and expanded Sunday package delivery starting next week, USPS is asking customers to plan ahead and ship things earlier to avoid any uncertainty about gifts arriving in time for Christmas.

The head of the U.S. effort to produce a coronavirus vaccine says the first immunizations could happen on Dec. 12.

With more people staying home right now, gas prices are down again...gas is about 50 cents per gallon cheaper than a year ago at this time.

11/24/20

The state of Minnesota has released a new app to alert people if they've been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Downloading the app is completely voluntary, and Governor Walz said no private information will be stored by the state, Google or Apple.

As temps start to tumble heading into winter, the Minnesota DNR is urging people to be cautious around newly formed ice. The DNR said ice thickness can vary greatly early in the season; and even where ice hasn't formed yet, the water temperatures are dangerously cold. They recommend not walking on ice until there's at least four inches of new, clear ice, and it's thickness should also be checked every 150 feet.

And the Gophers football team isn't practicing today after presumptive positive Covid-19 tests yesterday. Their goal is to return to a regular practice schedule tomorrow in preparation for Saturday's game at Wisconsin.

11/25/20

CentraCare's No Visitor policy is back in effect as Covid-19 cases continue to rise. There are certain exceptions where one visitor can be present, such as labor support, high risk procedures, end of life, and guardian of a minor.

And the annual battle for the axe between the Gophers and the Badgers football teams will have to wait 'til next year. The game was supposed to be played this weekend but was called off after several players and staff for the Gophers tested positive for Covid-19.

This is still happening though....the annual Country Lights Festival in Sartell starts next week, they've had to make some adjustments...there won't be hot chocolate or cookies or bonfires, and public restrooms will NOT be available...they're hoping to bring those back later in December...but you will still be able to walk through the winter wonderland under the glow of thousands of lights.

11/27

Governor Tim Walz said Wednesday that a pandemic relief package may be finalized as soon as next week to provide assistance to businesses hurt by the current shutdown. He also announced a \$1 million relief fund toward the state's tourism industry.

St. Cloud Area School District 742 will be launching homework hubs in different neighborhoods beginning Monday as its preschool and grade school students start distance learning for the rest of the semester. WiFi, homework help and technology assistance will be offered at the hubs.

11/30/20

If you know a senior who could use a little help with food, Catholic Charities Senior Dining will have frozen meals available at several different locations throughout December for those 60

years old and older. It's free, but of course donations are accepted. Call Catholic Charities to learn more.

The annual Country Lights Festival in Sartell starts tomorrow, they've had to make some adjustments...there won't be hot chocolate or cookies or bonfires, and public restrooms will NOT be available...they're hoping to bring those back later in December...but you will still be able to walk through the winter wonderland under the glow of thousands of lights from dusk 'til dawn.

And the Vikings pulled out a narrow win yesterday...they beat the Carolina Panthers 28-27 thanks to a late TD pass from Kirk Cousins. They're now 5-6 on the year.

12/1/20

After all the shopping over the weekend, today is a great chance to give back, it's Giving Tuesday. There are a number of ways to be a part of it...you can give financially to a non-profit...it can also be as simple as reaching out to your neighbors, packing a blessing bag for someone in need, or just finding another way to extend kindness today.

Governor Walz says Minnesota will get its first coronavirus vaccine shipments by mid-December. The limited initial doses will be reserved for certain groups -- health care workers or medically vulnerable older people.

And the Gophers football team unfortunately had to cancel another game...they won't be playing Saturday against Northwestern due to a large number of COVID cases among players and staff.

12/2/20

Minnesota budget officials said yesterday they expect a \$641 million dollar surplus between now and June, revising their earlier prediction of a [\\$2.4 billion dollar shortfall](#) from the May report. It was good news to lawmakers who want to pass a big coronavirus economic relief package.

If you or someone you know is looking for a job, there's a curbside career fair going on today. It's hosted by CareerForce and It's happening by the St. Cloud Technical College from 1 to 3 today. All you have to do is drive, walk, or bike up to get a bag filled with information on local job openings. You can go to the CareerForce Facebook page to learn more.

And after a year and a half of upgrades, the St. Cloud armory is welcoming soldiers back as of this week. It was a 6.5 million dollar renovation project.

12/3/20

The Minnesota State High School League is meeting today to vote on a plan for high school winter sports and state tournament schedules. The board of directors is expected to approve a recommendation to start the season on December 21.

A strange situation in the Twin Cities last night as a small, single-engine plane made a suspected emergency landing on Interstate-35 W near New Brighton. The plane crashed into a vehicle that was on the interstate, but there were no injuries. Officials are investigating.

And the Minnesota Department of Health reported that it could be as soon as December 18th that COVID 19 vaccinations start in Minnesota. In general, health care workers are expected to receive a vaccine in the first round of immunizations.

12/4/20

The Minnesota State High School League board of directors voted unanimously in a virtual session yesterday to start the winter sports season as soon as a pause on high school and youth sports is lifted by the state.

St. Cloud's police officers may start wearing body cameras in 2021. There'll likely be a public hearing on it at a St. Cloud City Council meeting later this month.

And if you're a movie buff, big news there...Warner Brothers pictures announced they'll be releasing all of their 2021 movies not only to theaters, but also to HBO Max at the same time. After one month, they'll stop streaming and continue to play only in theaters.

12/7/20

Today marks the 79th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. We remember today more than 2400 Americans who lost their lives.

Retail experts are expecting to see an unprecedented number of shipped packages this holiday season. If you want your gifts to arrive by Christmas, the Postal Service deadline is Dec. 18 for First Class Mail. The deadline for Priority is Dec. 19, and Dec. 23 for Express/Overnight shipping. But of course not a bad idea just to get them mailed sooner rather than later.

And the Vikings pulled out another nailbiter yesterday...they squeaked past the Jaguars in overtime 27-24. If the playoffs started today they'd be in...they're now 6-6 on the year.

12/8/20

It's been a tough year financially for a lot of people, and if you or someone you know needs some help with utility bills, there is help locally through TriCap....you can visit TriCap dot org to learn more...just go to the "assistance" tab and click on "energy."

The 2021 budget for the city of St. Cloud was approved last night by the city council. Part of the budget includes body cameras for St. Cloud police.

And if you're a fan of the Olympics, the summer games in 2024 will include some new sports...among them breakdancing, as well as skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing.

12/9/20

Gov. Tim Walz addressed plans for a vaccine rollout in Minnesota once one is approved in the US. Phase 1A would be Long-term care residents/workers, health care workers

- Phase 1B would be Other essential workers (EMS workers, teachers, etc.)
- Phase 1C would be Adults 65+ or with medical conditions

The plan is subject to change. Minnesota Department of Health officials say there are priority groups within each phase.

Well it seems like common sense, but just another reminder to always buckle that seatbelt...the Minnesota Department of Public Safety had a Click it or Ticket seat belt enforcement campaign late last month, and they gave out more than 1500 tickets, including almost 350 in the St. Cloud area.

12/10/20

Governor Walz said yesterday he'd convene a special session on Monday to urge the Minnesota Legislature to pass a COVID-19 relief package for those struggling from the pandemic.

The annual Ice Fishing Extravaganza in Brainerd, like a lot of things, will be a little different this year. The January event normally attracts 10 thousand fishers, but since that many can't be together right now, you'll be allowed to choose your own lake, use ice houses, and then register your fish with the app FishDonkey. You can learn more at icefishing.org.

And Gophers men's hockey is off to a great start...they're #4 in the nation and they're 8 and 0 after a 4 to zero win over #5 Michigan yesterday.

12/11/20

A U.S. government advisory panel endorsed widespread use of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine yesterday. Vaccinations could begin within days, depending on how quickly the FDA signs off, as expected, on the expert committee's recommendation.

Governor Walz's office has confirmed that he'll make an announcement Monday about whether he'll extend the 4 week pause on [social gatherings, bars, restaurants, gyms, and sports](#) or allow it to expire. As of now it expires a week from today.

Meanwhile the group Let Them Play Minnesota is suing Governor Walz and other state officials, seeking an end to the pause on youth sports.

A loving dad...a giant inflatable grinch...and a whole lot of money raised for a charity...that's today's good news story of the day...it actually happened in the UK where a dad wanted to surprise his daughter...she loves the grinch...so he thought "Hey I'll order an inflatable one for the yard." What he didn't realize is that he wasn't just ordering any run of the mill inflatable grinch....he accidentally ordered a 35 foot tall inflatable grinch, bigger than their house....one of only 5 of these in the WORLD. But then the story gets even better...somebody stopped by and offered him money to take a picture with this giant grinch since it was such a novelty. And so the dad decided to use it to make people happy, while also raising money for the hospice care center that cared for HIS father at the end of his life. And so far, thousands have visited, and he's raised 20 thousand dollars. That'll make your heart grow three sizes.

12/15/20

A COVID-19 relief package is headed to Governor Tim Walz's desk after the measure cleared both the Minnesota Senate and House yesterday by overwhelming majorities. It's aimed at businesses and workers who took the biggest hit from the four-week "pause" ordered by Gov. Walz last month.

The first COVID-19 vaccinations in Minnesota are scheduled to start today at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and next week at hospitals and clinics statewide.

And in case you missed it, the Battle for the Axe between the Minnesota Golden Gophers and the Wisconsin Badgers is back on after being cancelled earlier this year...the football teams will now face off this Saturday in Madison...kickoff is at 3 PM.

12/16/20

Governor Walz is scheduled to announce Minnesota's next steps in the battle against COVID-19 this afternoon. He's expected to announce that indoor dining at bars and restaurants will remain on "pause" through the holiday season. The governor is also expected to lay out a strategy for in-person learning for elementary students.

We're just 9 days away from Christmas now, and If you or someone you know would be blessed by a free Christmas day dinner, [Agape Warriors Ministry](#) will be offering one again this year, drive thru style at [The Waters Church](#) in Sartell. You can also consider a donation

to help make the meal available for others. You can learn more on the Agape Warriors Ministry Facebook page.

12/17/20

Governor Walz announced plans yesterday to get children back into elementary schools in January. Fitness centers and some other businesses that were shut down last month will be allowed to open in a limited capacity, though bars and restaurants will remain closed for indoor service through January 11th. Youth Sports will be able to resume January 4th.

It's not here quite yet, but there COULD be another stimulus check on the way...Congressional negotiators are closing in on an economic relief package that would deliver additional help to businesses, \$300 per week jobless checks, and \$600 stimulus payments to most Americans. But no deal has been made just yet.

Starting January 3rd, Metro Bus will reduce weekday Fixed Routes to hourly service only for all routes except Route 10. There'll be no changes to weekend service, and other metro bus services like dial-a-ride, Connex, and NorthSTAR Link won't be affected.

12/18/20

A government advisory panel endorsed a second COVID-19 vaccine yesterday. The FDA is expected to follow the recommendation for the vaccine from Moderna and the National Institutes of Health.

Preschool and elementary students in St. Cloud's District 742 will go back to a hybrid learning model starting January 19th, and then the plan is to have k through 5 students for in-person learning full time starting March 8th.

Here's a cool way to make a difference this holiday season...it's called The Great Minnesota Cheer Together...and the idea is just to send a bunch of cards to residents in long-term care to put smiles on their faces. You can mail cards directly yourself, or there are drop-off locations at area businesses, and then they'll be distributed. You can find out more by looking up Great Minnesota Cheer Together on Facebook.

12/21/20

Looks like you'll be getting that second stimulus check soon....congressional leaders reached a deal yesterday on a \$900 billion dollar [COVID-19](#) economic relief package that includes \$600 dollar direct payments to Americans and \$300 dollars in enhanced unemployment for the next 10 weeks.

The FDA authorized emergency rollout of a second Covid 19 vaccine...this one from Moderna...initial shipments went out yesterday.

And it was a close one, but the Vikings fell to the Bears yesterday 33-27, making their playoff hopes very slim. Their next game is against the New Orleans Saints on Christmas Day.

12/22/20

Congress approved a second round of direct aid payments to Americans, needing only President Donald Trump's signature to go forward. If you received your first stimulus check by mail, you'll want to sign up for direct deposit to make sure you get it quicker. It sounds like payments could arrive by the end of the month.

Sauk-Rapids Rice students of all ages will continue distance learning until at least January 15th in order to give district officials time to evaluate data on Covid-19 after the holidays.

And the City of St. Cloud wants to encourage you to support local businesses in the downtown area, so they're waiving parking fees through the holidays. Metered parking will be free until January 4th.

12/23/20

President Donald Trump suggested yesterday he may not sign the Covid-19 financial relief legislation that made it through congress. He called on lawmakers to increase stimulus payments for most Americans from 600 dollars to 2000 dollars.

St. Cloud Police Officers will start wearing body cameras next year after the decision was unanimously approved by the St. Cloud City Council.

And Sartell St. Stephen Schools are making a plan for January...they're planning to have pre K-5 students back to in-person learning on January 11th, while grades 6 through 12 will move to a hybrid learning model, with hopes that they'll be back completely in-person by the end of January.

12/28/20

President Donald Trump signed the legislation that'll send most Americans another stimulus check...600 dollars per individual, 1200 dollars per couple. The payments should start arriving a

lot faster than the first stimulus check did, since a lot of the setup work was already done back in March. Could be just a few days before you see that in your account if you have it set up to directly deposit.

Just a reminder from the Stearns County Sheriff's Office to be cautious if you're gonna venture out on the ice...a couple went through the ice on an ATV on Two Rivers Lake in Holding Township over the weekend...fortunately they both got out and were ok, but some lakes in the area still have spots of thin ice due to water fowl activity.

12/29/20

Well you COULD be getting a bigger stimulus check....yesterday The U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass a bill to increase the [\\$600 stimulus checks to \\$2,000](#). But it faces an uncertain future in the Senate, where it'll need a two-thirds majority for the bill to head to President Trump's desk.

Minnesota health officials released new guidance allowing high school athletics and other youth sports to resume games and scrimmages on January 14th, with masks required in some sports.

Gophers men's basketball had a big win last night, knocking off #17 Michigan State 81 to 56. Their next game is a border battle against Wisconsin on Thursday.

12/30/20

Roads are still slick this morning...be careful as you're driving...As of 9 last night, police responded to 99 crashes, 119 spinouts and six jackknifed semis across the state.

The minimum wage in Minnesota is going up slightly. Starting this Friday the 1st, it'll be 10.08 per hour for large employers and 8.21 an hour for small employers.

If you're looking for some outdoor fun, 5 of the 11 skating rinks in St. Cloud are open now...at Talahi School, Schmidt Park, Raymond Park, Northway Park, and Haws Park. Lake George is NOT open yet...they're asking people to stay off it until they can be sure it's safe.

12/31/20

You'll want to check your bank account today-the IRS began depositing the latest round of stimulus payments into American's accounts yesterday already. If you don't see yours yet, the deposits are expected to continue over the next couple weeks, and paper checks will begin being mailed this week as well. Since the requested \$2,000 stimulus was stopped in the senate, if eligible you'll still receive the approved \$600 per adult or \$1200 per couple, and an additional \$600 per eligible dependent. For more information visit [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

Residents of Centracare's long term care facilities have begun receiving the Covid 19 vaccine this week in Central Minnesota. Health officials say to date, over 38,000 doses of the vaccine have been administered throughout the state. They say it's likely that it will be spring or even into early summer before it will be available to those not considered high risk or essential workers.