

2015 2nd Quarter Issues and Programs Report - KTTC NewsCenter

1. Economic & Downtown Development/Jobs/Tourism

4-8 Tonight, the controversial Oliver Apartments complex is one step closer to construction after the Rochester Planning and Zoning commission approves the last part of the plan.

4-15 A northwest Rochester subdivision is once again fighting for its neighborhood... trying to keep a commercial development from coming in. Neighbors' yards are displaying "No Walgreens" signs in opposition to the project, and had other plans to create a community garden in the space.

4-23 It's another mile stone in Rochester's journey to becoming Destination Medical Center tonight. The DMCC board has officially adopted the development plan that will shape the future of our city. NewsCenter's Ali Killam joins us in our studio with more.

4-30 DMC is literally about to take shape in a big way after Its board approves two development projects today ... one of which could break ground within a few weeks. The first is a 140-million dollar 23-story building that would include a luxury hotel, apartments, retail, and restaurant space. The Titan Development project at Broadway and Center is set to be the biggest project since the Gonda Building.

5-5 Community leaders and supporters of the Hormel Institute's cancer research center got a tour of the expansion going on there. 20 laboratories and a Live learning center are being added to help with the institute's cutting-edge cancer research. The 4-point-5 million dollar learning center will feature a two hundred-fifty seat lecture hall with theater-style seating to host international conferences to discuss cancer research and medical advancements.

5-8 A building standing tall in the heart of downtown Rochester for more than 100 years will soon be writing a new history in the Med City. Currently occupied by the Words Players Theatre, the Conley-Maass (mass) building has a long history in the city, housing everything from a woolen mill to a camera company. The building was recently purchased by Hunter and Traci Downs, a local couple who also own Cafe Steam. Their plan is to renovate the historic building and eventually house a variety of tech-businesses, along with a cafe or restaurant on the bottom floor.

5-13 A new waterfront development project moves forward tonight. The Rochester Planning and Zoning Commission has approved the preliminary plan for an apartment complex.

5-14 Rochester's Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company is asking the city to help provide funds to relocate to a new facility. The new facility would be a 97-thousand square foot warehouse and distribution facility... and all 127 employees at the current facility would get to keep their jobs at the new place.

5-20 It's a meeting of the new and old minds in Albert Lea, as the rich, historical downtown is preserved and improved for the future. Today the town's historic preservation commission had a fair to show why history is worth investing in.

5-22 Country music fans are flocking to north Iowa this weekend to see some of their favorite artists hit the stage. The 2nd annual Tree Town Music Festival is underway and

packing in the crowds. NewsCenter's Alanna Martella was in Forest City today and has more on this major country music event.

5-26 The avian flu-related layoffs at the Jennie-O Turkey Store processing plant in Faribault began today. 233 employees are temporarily getting laid off because the avian flu has had a bad impact on production numbers. The plant manager says the goal is for everyone to be able to return to work when bird numbers return to normal levels. In the meantime... the Minnesota Workforce Center in Faribault is helping many of the folks laid off at the plant.

5-27 Austin-based Hormel Foods enters into an agreement with Applegate Farms... its largest acquisition yet.

5-28 Rochester International Airport is adding more improvements this season... which could be good for frequent flyers and summer travelers.

5-28 Becoming America's Healthiest City, helping to expand IBM's future, and providing a place for the arts. Those are some of the priorities DMCC board leaders laid out this morning for the city of Rochester.

6-4 Jumping onto the food truck bandwagon, BB's Pizzeria has set up shop downtown Rochester. However, finding a place to settle its truck to sell pizzas has been no easy task...given a few rules of the city. The "Food Vending On Public Street" Ordinance states food vending vehicles selling food of any kind cannot be set up on public streets, unless a license is obtained, which doesn't happen often.

6-4 The unofficial start to summer is underway in downtown Rochester. Thursdays on First and Third is in full swing and people have been showing up in droves all day.

6-4 As the summer heats up, so is the movement to block a high speed zip rail line running between Rochester and the Twin Cities.

6-5 There's family fun all weekend long in Pine Island... and especially so if you love cheese! It's the kickoff to southern Minnesota's festival season, and it really seems to be the highlight of the year for some.

6-8 Lake City has become the latest in a string of towns to offer residential building land for dirt cheap, hoping someone will use it to build a home and move in. The Eaglewood Estates 5th addition is 40 acres of empty land that will be available for purchase on June 15th.

6-9 The city of Lanesboro is celebrating a period of unexpected growth. Ten new businesses have popped up since the beginning of the year.

6-9 Tonight, the public had the chance to weigh in on the future of transportation in Rochester as we look ahead to year 2040. For many residents, it's transportation on two wheels and two feet that is most needed in for our city streets.

6-12 Today kicks off a weekend of Dairy Days in Adams, where the whole town is getting in on some early rummage sale action. It all comes full circle here during Dairy Days. Residents are the ones who donate all of the items and the funds go back to the Next Step program.

6-12 The city of Rochester has told BB's Pizzeria to move its food truck. Just last week, we took an inside look at the mobile restaurant, which has been operating outside

of Calvary Episcopal Church. Now we're learning the city called the owners Monday, saying they couldn't park there.

6-17 Just a few months ago the DMC board gave the Destination Medical Center plan the go ahead. Now community leaders are listening to the public, and preparing them for the potential side effects that come with population growth.

6-18 It's said to be the second longest celebration in the country...right behind the Kentucky Derby... and today the 141st annual Viola Gopher Count kicked off.

6-19 There are big changes coming for the Aroma Pie Shop, an award-winning bakery in Whalan. The popular spot for bicyclists is now on the search for a new owner. The pie-shop has been a staple in the Lanesboro area for 30 years, serving slices of everything from strawberry rhubarb to classic apple. But the baker-in-chief for 11 years, Maggie Gergen, says it's about time to hang up the apron.

6-29 Destination Medical Center has become a destination for developers making for some tensions with neighborhoods on the road to construction. Now, the Rochester City Council is brainstorming with the county - on ways to give the public more opportunities for input in the future.

6-29 A piece of Rochester history is on its way back home. A clock tower that has held a spot at Mayo Civic Center in recent years is moving back to its historic location with approval from city council today. The clock was first placed at Rochester Fire Station One at Broadway and 6th Street Southwest back in 1899.

2. Political/Governmental

4-9 Tonight was Governor Mark Dayton's fifth State of the State address. He's asking lawmakers to take risks as they decide important issues in the session's final six weeks.

4-13 A bill that would give undocumented immigrants in Minnesota driver's licenses is being debated at the State Capitol. However, people took matters in their own hands today by heading up to St. Paul and talking with legislators to try and convince them to pass the measure.

4-15 Governor Dayton is criticizing lawmakers from both the House and Senate after they exclude his universal preschool plan in their education budgets.

5-1 U-S Senator Joni Ernst stops in Cresco, Iowa as part of her promise to visit every county in the state. Ernst toured the Howard County Regional Hospital and its brand new facilities. Regional Health CEO Robin Schluter described how they are changing things for the better. Ernst says she's looking for feedback on what is working, and what isn't - especially when it comes to telemedicine, or the use of technology to bring improved medical services to rural communities.

5-11 Former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, Rick Santorum, says he'll announce in a few weeks whether he'll seek the Republican presidential nomination in 2016. Today, he stopped at KTTC to talk about some of the big issues our country is facing.

5-14 House and Senate negotiators have agreed with Governor Mark Dayton to a roughly five percent bump for public colleges and universities. The higher education

budget earmarks 30-million dollars for the University of Minnesota's medical school, one of Dayton's priorities this session.

5-18 An historic icon of Rochester is officially purchased by the city tonight. And a disagreement over the development of the Greek Orthodox church before its approval tonight. NewsCenter's Ali Killam joins us live in our newsroom with more.

5-19 Less than 24 hours after lawmakers scrambled to pass a number of bills, Governor Dayton announced his intention to veto a controversial education bill.

5-26 Governor Mark Dayton and House Speaker Kurt Daudt are beginning their work at trying to strike a compromise over the state budget.

5-27 The Rochester Planning and Zoning Commission denies a proposal for a Walgreens development in a northwest Rochester neighborhood. A drove of neighbors in a northeast Rochester subdivision turned out at tonight's planning and zoning meeting.

5-29 Gov. Mark Dayton has abandoned his priority plan for statewide pre-kindergarten but remains at odds with GOP lawmakers over the amount of funding for public schools.

6-4 Another possible presidential candidate made a stop in Northern Iowa this afternoon. This time, it's businessman and real estate mogul Donald Trump who's on the campaign trail.

6-5 Lawmakers are trading offers to resolve the biggest barrier to finishing the state's budget. Governor Dayton had promised he won't call a special session until lawmakers agreed to repeal a change that allows counties to hire private auditors - essentially compromising the job of the state auditor.

6-8 With D-M-C on the horizon, the city of Rochester is set to expand at an astounding rate. A new proposal brought before the Committee of the Whole this afternoon is aimed at growing the Rochester Police Department's presence to keep up with the expanding city.

6-11 It is looking like the special session to finalize a state budget will get underway as early as tomorrow morning at the State Capitol. A few hours ago, House Speaker Kurt Daudt tweeted that he had signed an agreement for a special session to start at 10-o'clock tomorrow morning.

6-12 We begin with the latest from the State Office Building in St. Paul, where lawmakers have spent their entire day in a special session... trying to avoid a potential government shutdown. Just after nine tonight... the Senate voted 40-26 in favor of an amended agriculture and environment budget bill. This has been the controversial bill of the day. It failed earlier by just one vote. The bill includes changes to pesticide, wetland, buffer strip, and silica sand laws.

6-15 Gamehaven Park is officially the newest addition to Rochester's park system. The park's master plan was approved by the Rochester City Council tonight after being shown at the Committee of the Whole meeting earlier today.

6-16 After a months-long battle between developers and a passionate community the Rochester City Council has approved a business park in a northwest neighborhood. The project, which includes a drive-thru Walgreens and other potential businesses, like restaurants and other retail spaces, will sit on a plot of land off of Chateau Road and 55th street northwest.

6-23 With the affordable housing crisis mounting, Olmsted County takes a big step forward in the effort to tackle the problem. Today, board members unanimously adopted a resolution for special legislation and a tax district to help fund future projects.

3. Health Care Developments

4-7 Mayo Medical School is expanding its campus to two more states. Today the school announced it plans to establish branch campuses in Scottsdale, Arizona and Jacksonville, Florida.

4-24 The World Health Organization says asthma affects nearly 235 million people worldwide. Now Mayo clinic is making breakthroughs, discovering the roots of the disease, and coming up with potentially a new cure. NewsCenter's Mike Sullivan has the latest and joins us live in the newsroom.

4-30 A Spring Valley girl is fighting for her life after being diagnosed with a ravaging disease two years ago. Despite hearing this devastating news, the Perez family is helping their 7-year-old girl celebrate life, instead of fear it. NewsCenter's Ali Killam joins us live...with more.

5-1 This weekend walkers will fill the streets of Rochester to raise money for Multiple Sclerosis research. The disease affects millions worldwide...including a number of people here in Rochester. Sarah Larson is a registered nurse. In the past she cared for others suffering with MS...when she found out she too had the disease she began living her life in a new way.

5-8 It's ground breaking technology that is 12 years and \$190 million in the making. Mayo Clinic is entering a new era in medicine with its proton beam treatment facility. NewsCenter's Ali Killam has more on this quantum leap in medical cancer treatment.

5-14 Imagine your young child is suffering from regular symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea, but no matter where you go doctors are unsure what is going on. It's a parent's nightmare, but a reality for those with children suffering from a rare food allergy that has no diagnostic tests for confirmation. NewsCenter's Mike Sullivan met up with one little boy in town who has been dealing with the syndrome since birth.

5-20 Two area doctors have had their licenses suspended by the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice.

6-8 More than 100 doctors across the state have applied to be certified for Minnesota's new medical cannabis program in the first week of registration.

6-15 Mayo Clinic says "thank you" tonight to hundreds of volunteers who helped raise money to Help find cures for cancer through the Eagles Cancer Telethon on KTTC. Volunteers and Mayo Clinic researchers were thanked at the dinner tonight. Ten researchers were given monetary awards to carry on their pioneering work in 2015.

6-17 Mayo Clinic Cancer researchers are on the brink of a major cancer breakthrough. International researchers led by Mayo Clinic Oncologists have found a new way to identify and possibly stop the progression of many late-stage cancers. The associate director at Mayo Clinic Center for Individualized Medicine says the new approach can turn off the genes that prevent cancer from growing.

6-18 Tonight, dozens of people gathered to begin fundraising for Minnesota's first pediatric transplant hospitality house. Cy's Place is a facility where children and their families can call home while a child undergoes transplant and stem cell procedures in Rochester.

6-24 Beginning at the age of 40 - women begin their annual mammogram screenings - it's our primary offense at beating cancer. As a result, last year, Minnesota lawmakers passed a law that requires doctors to tell patients their breast density. But that has also left a lot of questions. For women with dense breast tissue... it might not be enough.

6-25 Another medical revolution in the Med City as a new orthotic knee brace is helping patients take a stand. German Bermudez is one of the first patients in the state to give it a try. Since being diagnosed with polio at age 6 he has been unable to bend his knee. This new device called the C brace uses hydraulics and a computer system to monitor his gait and stability.

6-25 The first patient to receive proton beam radiation therapy allowed us to sit in on her session at Mayo Clinic this morning. NewsCenter's Kimberly Davis was with her as she underwent treatment.

6-29 Mayo Clinic's transplant programs rank among the best in the country for survival rates. The news comes from the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients... which is a national database of transplant statistics. Rochester boasts strong survival outcomes for its liver transplant program.

4. Education

4-7 Tonight, the Rochester Public School board approved a request from Purdue University to research gifted education at Bamber Valley Elementary School.

4-15 Students at Southeast Technical College in Red Wing learn what goes into a guitar before it's ready to jam on. First year students in the guitar repair and building program focus on making basic acoustic guitars, but students in the advanced class broaden their range to create electric guitars, mandolins, and ukuleles. Students in both courses have been working since August on making their own instruments from scratch.

4-17 High school students in Lanesboro are putting their green thumbs to good use with the help of a new greenhouse. This year marks the second year that the school's horticulture class has had a greenhouse for hands-on learning and gardening.

4-22 Students at Ellis Middle School in Austin are learning what taking a career path in science could mean for them. NewsCenter's Alanna Martella was at Ellis this morning and has more on what the students learned.

4-29 A bit of controversy is rumbling in Rochester Public Schools after the announcement that two of the three high school librarians will be losing their jobs. As the district prepares for some budget cuts, the media centers are one of the areas feeling the resource snip. NewsCenter's Ali Killam joins us live in our newsroom with more.

5-5 The Rochester Public Schools board is moving forward with a referendum and asking the community to vote this fall on tax increases. Superintendent Michael Munoz says the time is now, or the district will see even more spending cuts.

5-6 This week marks National Teacher Appreciation Week and Austin's Pacelli Catholic High School is proud to call one of the state's best teachers their own. Today, dozens gathered at the school to honor social studies teacher Jim Parlin.

5-11 Hayfield Community School officials are discussing the financial state of the district tonight in front of a packed Brownsdale audience. The school board highlighted much-needed repairs for the schools in the district that could carry a price tag of more than 3 million dollars. Brownsdale residents flocked to the Brownsdale Elementary School gym due to their suspicion the district would look to close the elementary school to cover the costs.

5-14 Rochester parents are seeing firsthand how their children are using technology in the classrooms. Parents toured three schools today-- for a peek at how iPads have been implemented since January 26th. Students are taking quizzes, reading, and even practicing their orchestra instruments through the technology.

5-20 The Rochester Public School board is working to develop a referendum to bring to the community for a vote....as education costs increase.

5-21 The governor vetoed an education bill, partly because it lacked spending for universal preschool for 4-year-olds. Across the border in Wisconsin, the program already exists and 80 to 90 percent of parents in the Cochrane Fountain City District enroll their kids. Superintendent Thomas Hiebert says it's a sign of the times. As the number of families with two working parents grows, he says this opportunity gives the child a chance to develop more.

5-26 It was a big day for Grand Meadow Public Schools as they break ground on a new phy-ed complex. Construction won't officially begin until August, but school officials wanted students to participate today. The 6-point-4 million dollar gymnasium expansion will feature a walking and jogging trail and will also add four classrooms.

6-2 As the school year winds down, the Rochester Public School board moves forward with a budget for next year. It is also in talks of pushing back the timeline in the one-to-one iPad program in case of future budget case.

6-5 Austin High School students are ending one chapter of their lives and moving forward into another. Tonight they graduated from high school.

6-5 School is also out for the summer for Rochester Public School students! Area schools celebrated in a number of ways, holding cook-outs, dance parties, and playing games. George Gibbs Elementary held a "clap-out" for its fifth-graders, with grades K through 4 lining the hallways of the school to send them off.

6-15 Students at seven of Minnesota's state universities may see a tuition hike this fall. The Minnesota State College and Universities system... or MnSCU... announced a proposal today to increase tuition at state universities by 3-point-4 percent. RCTC in Rochester and Winona State University both fall under the MnSCU system.

6-16 Rochester Public Schools had a study session tonight centered around the district's digital learning transformation plan. The plan to eventually give all RPS students iPads completed its first phase last school year, but questions still remain about its future.

6-24 Tuition is going up at the University of Minnesota. Today during a special meeting... the University's Board of Regents approved a 2016 operating budget. The budget includes a one-and-a-half percent tuition increase for resident students.

5. Crime Prevention & Domestic Violence

4-1 An unusual amount of emergency vehicles were outside I.J Holton Intermediate school today. Mower County Deputies, Austin Police, and other emergency personnel were training for an active shooter in the school. Children were not in the building at the time, since it's spring break. The day focused on drills and teamwork and learning to react fast if a shooter was in the building.

4-9 A quiet street in Byron turns into a crime scene this afternoon after law enforcement arrest a man on the run. The suspect is behind bars tonight and is reported to have a laundry list of criminal history,

4-13 Three more Rochester businesses are targeted by burglars over the weekend. The recent surge in commercial burglaries has law enforcement on high alert and cautioning business owners to take extra steps in order to protect themselves. NewsCenter's Ali Killam digs deeper into the issue of security tonight... she has more from the newsroom.

4-28 Want to help the Austin Police Department fight crime? Well now there's an "app" for that.

5-7 Minnesota's Senate is setting up a clash with the House heading into the end of the session... over police body cameras. Today, language was added to the bill that would make most body camera footage private, which has been the biggest debate between lawmakers.

5-12 Sexual abuse charges are dismissed against an Austin Public Schools custodian. Gordon Gunter was arrested 15 months ago. Just last Thursday, the prosecutor in the case dismissed charges citing reasonable doubt to whether the sexual misconduct he was charged with took place.

5-12 An update tonight on the bank robbery that happened in Calmar, Iowa. Authorities have identified the suspect in the robbery and are seeking the public's help to catch him.

5-18 A Winona man has passed away following the same shooting incident that took the life of his wife. Police are calling it a murder-suicide.

5-18 Minnesota lawmakers approve legislation imposing regulations on police departments using license plate readers. The bill limits how long agencies can keep data gathered by the squad car cameras. If data is not being actively used in a criminal investigation after 60 days, it must be destroyed.

5-28 Austin Police have a new sergeant on duty. This is special though because she is the very first female sergeant to ever serve with the Austin P.D.

5-29 It's a painstaking reality that no family should ever face....yet the family of Donna Ingersoll has been grappling with her disappearance for 25 years. 25 years ago, Donna Ingersoll vanished without a trace...leaving her family with 25 years of not knowing. This weekend police believe is the best chance yet at finding any sort of clues as to what happened...and Donna's sisters say it's about time.

6-4 This week, the Freeborn County Sheriff's Office rolling out an initiative dubbed "Warrant Wednesday." Each week, the Sherriff's office will post the mugshot of a

wanted criminal in the area on their Facebook page with their name and other information. After 23 years in law enforcement, Sheriff Kurt Freitag says the use of social media allows his office to connect with the public in a new way.

6-5 There's a new crop of gardeners in Fillmore County. Last week, with the help from Fillmore County Sheriff Tom Kaase and master gardener Beth Pohlman from Fillmore County Public Health, a three bed garden was created by inmates. They have planted everything from watermelon, to herbs, and some vegetables. Inmates spend a few hours each week caring for their plot of land.

6-5 The Ramsey County Attorney is seeking criminal charges against the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. The charges are in response to the way sex abuse allegations were handled within the church, specifically with former Priest Curtis Wehmeyer.

6-15 Archbishop John Nienstedt of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis resigns in light of child sex abuse cases brought against priests in the Archdiocese.

6-17 A major development on Minnesota's Sex Offender Program today as a federal judge rules the program unconstitutional. Offenders argued the program is unconstitutional because no one has ever been fully discharged in the program's 20 years of service.

6-18 Two people are charged for allegedly using stolen data to create copies of credit cards here in Minnesota.

6-22 A hearing for a Waseca teen who allegedly planned to blow up his high school took place in Rochester this afternoon. Prosecutors argued the teen should be given a second psych evaluation to determine if John LaDue should be tried as an adult, but the defense contended there was not enough time to do so.

6-24 Governor Mark Dayton says he is willing to postpone his trade mission to Mexico to appear in a federal court over the state's embattled sex offender treatment program. A federal judge last week ruled the secure civil confinement program for more than 700 offenders was unconstitutional. Dayton and other state leaders have been summoned to that judge's courtroom in mid-August to begin fashioning a remedy.

6. Elderly/Handicapped/Minority Groups/Racism

4-14 A Stewartville lunch lady got quite the shock this morning when she came in to work. A cafeteria filled with students, singing "happy birthday." Anna Bussman turned 89-years today, and to thank her for all she does for the lunch room and students, she got a surprise birthday party.

4-20 The Rochester Senior and Recreation Center Project is moving forward...for now. The city council has approved measures that would start construction tomorrow...but leaves \$1 million up in the air.

4-24 There's a saying that goes – "Heroes are remembered... but legends never die." Tony Oliva was a star in the 1960s and 70s... spending his entire 15-year career in baseball with the Twins. He visited the Mower County Senior Center today to talk and share stories with fans.

4-28 As the Supreme Court grapples with this issue, Minnesota remains one of 37 states currently allowing same-sex unions. Ruth Larson and Rae Dunn are two local women who were married at Peace United Church of Christ. Since same-sex marriage became legal in the state, they say both the Rochester community and their families have been extremely supportive.

4-28 During the past day, the world has watched peaceful protests unravel into a state of fury and violence...that has stirred folks here in Rochester both with concern for the present and hope for the future. Events in Baltimore make it seem like a solution might be a far reach, but locals here say a change in culture and in policy is what's necessary for peace. "Nothing's been done, no congressional hearing, no change in legislation, no change in policy. When people see that, they're hurt, they're frustrated, they're scared."

5-5 Cinco De Mayo festivities are well underway all across the United States and Mexico. In Rochester a newcomer to the food scene is creating a lot of buzz for its Mexican cuisine. Lucy's Taco truck sits on the corner of Highway 14 and 15th Avenue Southeast next to Cub Foods. Lucy Hernandez brought her family to the Med city from Los Angeles in pursuit of owning her own restaurant.

5-8 Turkey hunting continues to draw people to the forest all across the state. Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch is hosting two groups for special Turkey hunts this weekend.

5-12 One of Rochester's newest senior living communities held a ribbon-cutting ceremony this afternoon. The Waters on Maywood opened for residents on March 1st, but staff decided to wait for warmer spring weather to host their official open house.

5-28 A Baptist minister, a Somalian Muslim, and the president of the local branch of the NAACP are named to a citizens commission overseeing police policy in Rochester. The group will examine and review policies developed by local law enforcement. Under city ordinance, one member was to be nominated by the local NAACP branch and another by the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission.

6-16 Residents of Winona Health's Lake Manor, and residents from other senior living facilities in Winona, gathered 'round for a good old-fashioned parade. Clowns, dancers, boy scouts, Winona law enforcement and more all joined in the fun, giving those who don't often get to watch parades their own private showing. One resident and parade member offered words of wisdom about enjoying life and living it to the fullest... something she has done for 102 years!

6-16 Over the weekend, we told you about the National Wheelchair Sports Camp taking place at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch. The camp allows paraplegics and amputees to participate in sports such as softball and paintball. Today they had the time of their lives at Lake Zumbro, doing a little waterskiing.

6-16 A Rochester woman is getting her 100th birthday wish by going airborne! Maxine Schultz is as vivacious as they get with a verve for life that exceeds those half her age... an entire crowd gathered at Silver Lake Park tonight to watch as Maxine hopped into her hot air balloon carriage sending her right into the clouds for a journey she will never forget.

6-18 A Rochester family is changing the lives and futures of many children by helping to bring them the gift of an education. Steven and Brenda Deick, along with their five children, just returned from a three-month mission trip where they helped build a school

in South Sudan. The school they built has a capacity for 400 children and they were able to build it in just three months.

6-22 The tragic incident that could have divided the nation - has in fact united it. Prayer vigils are being held across the country tonight... including here in Rochester to remember the victims of the Charleston shooting and their families. NewsCenter's Kimberly Davis was at the prayer vigil this evening and joins us live in the newsroom with more on the process of healing.

7. Environment

4-2 Governor Dayton was in the area earlier today making his case for water buffer strips. He met with farmers to discuss the contested proposal he says is necessary to improve our state's water quality. Alanna Martella was at the meeting today and has more.

4-22 Today is the 45th anniversary of Earth Day and for many the day is all about making our planet a better place to live. One way of doing that is recycling and reusing as much as possible. At Watson Recycling, they attempt to repurpose everything from the aluminum soda cans to materials found in trashed computers and TVs.

4-29 Residents across southeastern Minnesota can breathe a bit easier, thanks to a new report released by the American Lung Association. The group released its annual State of the Air Report today which found Rochester and Austin to be among the cleanest cities in the country when it came to ozone air pollution levels. The cities also received high marks when it came to 24-hour particle air pollution.

5-8 With walleye season just underway, the Minnesota D-N-R is stepping up enforcement to guard waters against aquatic invasive species.

5-11 Spring means blossoming flowers and budding trees. Despite their beauty, record high pollen readings are being recorded in the upper Midwest sending many people's allergies into a frenzy.

5-12 A trip to the grocery store could be a little bit different for some folks in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park. Both cities are considering plastic bag bans...and while Rochester hasn't considered ditching the material... one business encourages it.

5-29 Minnesota regulators approve a 250-million dollar solar power project that's set to be the biggest in the state.

6-2 Fishermen are usually thrilled to pull in a big fish, but five caught just South of Stillwater in the past week have both anglers and wildlife managers concerned. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources says this is the farthest upstream bighead carp have been found in the St. Croix River. Silver and bighead carp are two Asian carp species threatening the Mississippi and connected waters.

6-2 A new study of Minnesota Lakes and rivers finds there is widespread contamination of chemicals. 11 lakes and four rivers were chosen at random to complete the study by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Researchers found 27 chemicals in the lakes and 56 in the rivers. The most commonly found chemical was DEET, the active ingredient in insect repellants, antibiotics, and various pharmaceutical drugs.

6-3 The Midwest Peregrine Society and Mayo Clinic partner to help save the peregrine falcon. Today a new flock of baby falcons were branded to keep track of them in the wild.

6-3 The Emerald Ash Borer already claims territory in Olmsted, Houston, and Winona county. In April the small insect staked it's claim in a 4th county in our region, Fillmore County. Now the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is planning another quarantine zone.

6-10 As more and more Ash trees fall victim to another invasive species...the Emerald Ash Borers, arborists are hard at work to save the trees that have remained untouched. Today, arborists were hard at work protecting a row of four ash trees adjacent to Merchant Bank's South Rochester branch. To protect the trees, the arborists inject a formula directly into the heart of the trees that is designed to keep E-A-B away.

6-10 The Minnesota Department of Natural resources and other groups are hard at work to stop the spread of Asian carp in Minnesota. Congress has ordered the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock closed to stop its northward spread.

6-11 The physical mess at the Dairy Land power plant could be cleaned up as early as next week - but the legal, and possibly environmental mess could last much longer. This all started when bottles of mercury were found in an office in late May... and a thick layer of diesel fuel was found floating on about three feet of water in the basement. Since then, there's been extensive testing and cleaning in the building with help from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The Dairy-Land power-plant was shut down in 1986, and the building sold to a local family who used it for fixing cars and storage.

6-19 A project that's been on the Shell Rock River Watershed District's to-do list for a decade, is officially finished. A ribbon-cutting was held to celebrate the Albert Lea Dam and Fish Barrier Project... as well as the Shell Rock River Headwaters Project. Both were established to manage fish and aquatic vegetation, along with creating a new dam to replace the old dam from the 1920s.

6-25 Rochester is looking into a new bus that doesn't run on diesel and is cleaner for the environment. Today this battery-powered electric bus made the rounds. It is supposed to be able to operate 24 hours a day without having to go back to refuel. To keep it charged through the day... route stops would have a robotic arm that makes contact with the roof of the bus and charges the battery in less than 10 minutes.

8. Youth

4-6 Some Rochester students had a special visitor today to kick off their "Read-a-thon." Marcus Sherels from the Minnesota Vikings stopped by Winston Churchill Elementary School this afternoon to share some advice with the students. The read-a-thon is a fundraiser encouraging the kids to read and is also raising money for an outdoor classroom.

4-22 One prom princess is seeing her dream come true next weekend at the age of 7. Being the Belle of the Ball is at the top of Isabel Perez's bucket list...as she battles a life threatening disease. NewsCenter's Ali Killam joins us live in our studio with more on her story.

5-8 There are new installments outside Kasson-Mantorville Middle School today. Two new buddy benches have been installed all thanks to a 6th grader who raised 600 dollars in one month by selling her canvas paintings.

5-19 Three Kasson-Mantorville seventh graders and their app are on their way to San Francisco. On Saturday the team found out they will be one of four teams internationally to compete in the annual Technovation Challenge. In early May, the team competed in the second annual "Appalooza" in Minneapolis where they pitched their app "Mayo Freetime". Its purpose is to help Mayo patients from outside of Rochester find their way around during downtime between medical appointments.

5-22 Weeks ago we told you about a local coach encouraging young track and field athletes to set the bar high. Today was his Elite Meet for Junior High athletes. NewsCenter's Mike Sullivan was trackside at Kasson-Mantorville today for all the action, he joins us with more.

5-27 Another prestigious scholarship is awarded to a Rochester senior who has juggled school, work, volunteering, and activism. Neda Khi, a senior at Century High School, was one of three statewide recipients of the Red Wagon Award. The 500-dollar scholarship was awarded for key's service and leadership skills. Neda led various clubs at Century high and advocated for the transition of Gage East into housing for the homeless, she told us today that her dedication to social justice won't stop after high school.

6-2 It's summer job season for many teens and that's a good thing as many Rochester employers are beginning to offer seasonal jobs catered to this age group. In some cases it has become competitive.

6-10 With the kids out of school for the summer, it's common that some can be left alone at home. To make sure they're safe... the Albert Lea Future Farmers Association Alumni put on a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day. About 60 kindergarteners through third graders participated in a number of different activities---all teaching what to do in various hazardous situations.

6-11 A vision of love and compassion is what has inspired two young women in Rochester to make it their mission to save lives around the world, one photograph at a time.

6-22 Rochester's youth took over Soldiers Field this evening as they participate in a variety of games and competitions for Teen Night. Many could be seen swarming the Treasure Island stage this evening for a lip-synch battle and other activities.

6-23 Two teenagers are involved in an A-T-V crash near Albert Lea this afternoon. The sheriff's office says it appeared they were going to fast on a curve and hit a tree head on. A 12-year-old girl was driving the A-T-V and was airlifted to Rochester with injuries to her right hand and abdomen. A 15-year-old boy was riding with her and was thrown off, but wasn't otherwise injured.

6-24 Rochesterfest rolls on here in the city, and tonight is fun for all ages. Tonight the youth movement invades Soldiers Field for Family Fun Night.

9. Substance Abuse

4-3 The pain drug use and abuse can cause a family can last a lifetime. Today, a Rochester family is sharing their story of pain and loss in an effort to help others avoid a tragedy like theirs. On Sunday, 22-year-old Travis Holder of Rochester died of a drug overdose after a long battle with drug addiction. His parents, Mike and Victoria, say he survived an overdose in November and received treatment, but slipped back into old ways. The Holder's are now sending a message to other families of hope about overdose and addiction.

4-10 An Eyota woman accused of obtaining prescription drugs using more than 30 false identities, pleads guilty to her crimes. She visited doctors from 11 different health providers, including Mayo Clinic locations in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Dusso was caught when a nurse practitioner at one of those locations became suspicious and alerted security.

4-23 Summer is nearly here, and it is one of deadliest times to be on Minnesota roads due, in part, to people drinking and driving. Tonight, in Rochester, we remembered some of the victims killed by those under the influence. Sheriff Kevin Torgerson spoke about the importance of educating young people on the dangers of drinking and driving.

4-28 The Olmsted County Board of Commissioners passes a new Social Host Ordinance hoping it will deter underage drinking.

4-29 A plan to bring a drug court to Olmsted County has been a decade in the making and now it is finally taking a big step forward.

5-7 A workshop for Minnesota's Toward Zero Death campaign is held... highlighting crash facts, best preventive practices, and personal impact stories. You may remember the wrong-way drunk driving crash in Rochester last fall that killed a 9 year old boy and paralyzed his 7 year old cousin. Today, Summer Bishop read a speech written by her sister Amber Bishop, the driver in that crash, who spoke of their family's heartache... and their difficulty adjusting to a new life.

5-11 A 19-year-old Winona man is arrested after the smell of marijuana was detected coming from a package addressed to him at a Winona post office.

5-14 Seven people tied to a drug ring that distributed heroin across the country are off the streets in Austin. All seven suspects arrested yesterday face varying counts of third degree sale of drug charges. Some face additional charges of possession as well.

5-15 Nearly one million dollars' worth of methamphetamine is off the streets after the arrest of three people in Rochester. In all... the arrests led to the seizure of eight kilos-- about 17 pounds-- of meth worth up to one million dollars.

6-10 Nicotine poisonings of children are on the rise in 2014 after health officials see a 35 percent jump. The Minnesota Department of Health says the number of children ages 5 and younger poisoned by nicotine has jumped from three in 2012 to 62 last year. Officials say the rising use of e-cigarettes and the concentrated liquid, or e-juice, nicotine products have become a popular alternative to traditional smoking.

6-15 Harsher penalties will be served up to drivers who get behind the wheel after tipping back one too many. In August, the blood alcohol content threshold for a gross misdemeanor drunk driving charge will lower to point 1-6. That's point 0-4 percent points lower than the previous limit, but is still twice the legal limit for misdemeanor DWIs.

6-19 A large amount of drugs is off Rochester streets after being confiscated in a bust yesterday. Police say they found 830 grams of synthetic marijuana, six grams of heroin, and eight grams of marijuana.

6-29 Two men are caught with cocaine in Decorah, Iowa. George Martinez and Angel Barrientos were cited for possession of cocaine with the intent to deliver, and child endangerment.

2014 Around Town 2nd Quarter Schedule

April 4 – World Festival, Rochester; The Big Sing

April 11 – Rochester Figure Skating Club Ice Show; Choral Arts Ensemble

April 18 – Unleash the She 5K & 10K; Leadership Greater Rochester
Mini-Libraries Project

April 25 – Family Service Rochester, Spring Cleaning Services for
Seniors; Rochester Arts Center

May 2 – Springfest at Oxbow Park, Byron; SE Minnesota Youth Orchestra

May 9 – Jefferson Elementary School Playground Project, Rochester;
JDRF Roll & Stroll to fight Type 1 Diabetes

May 16 – Thursday's on First and Third, Rochester; Scottish Rite
Children's Language Foundation

May 23 – Ability Building Center Golf Tournament, Rochester; 3rd Annual
Garden Fair

May 30 – Rhubarb Festival, Lanesboro; Camp Campanian's "Uncorked"
fundraiser

June 6 – WWII Hangar Dance; Rochester Senior Center's Million \$
Hole in One Shootout

June 13 – Imagination Library, United Way of Olmsted County;
Mantorville's Stagecoach Days

June 20 – Rochesterfest

June 27 – Douglas United Methodist Church 100 Year Celebration;
Arc Golf Tournament, Byron's Somerby Golf Club