

BC-MN-XGR--E-Cigarettes,129

Plan for e-cigarette rules reaches Senate floor

Eds: APNewsNow.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - A plan to classify electronic cigarettes in the same fashion as the conventional kind has survived its toughest committee test and now awaits a Senate floor vote.

The bill cleared the Senate Commerce Committee after an attempt to weaken the proposed regulations failed Monday on a 7-6 vote. It would add so-called vaping to state indoor air laws that bar tobacco use in public places and most businesses.

The e-cigarette devices heat a liquid nicotine solution. Users inhale a vapor but they don't emit the chemicals, tar or odor of regular cigarettes. Product advocates say it sends the wrong signal to treat them equally before scientific studies determine health risks.

No one spoke against provisions that would impose criminal penalties in cases where the devices are sold to minors.

AP-WF-03-24-14 1929GMT

Leg Session / Taxes
Political others

BC-MN-XGR--E-Cigarette Regulations, 1st Ld-Writethru,126

Dayton splits with health commissioner on e-cigs

(Eds: APNewsNow. Deletes extra 'Dayton' in 3rd paragraph. Will be updated)
ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - Gov. Mark Dayton has broken with his Health Department commissioner over the extent of regulation needed on electronic cigarettes.

Dayton told the Minneapolis Star Tribune (<http://strib.mn/OUflRq>) that he is uncomfortable with legislative efforts to put e-cigarettes in the same category as conventional cigarettes when it comes to prohibition of use in public spaces. His comments published Wednesday directly contradict testimony from Health Commissioner Ed Ehlinger.

Dayton says he would sign a bill to restrict children's ability to buy e-cigarettes, but he would likely oppose proposed restrictions on their use indoors.

In a Senate committee Monday, Ehlinger described the vapor-emitting devices as "a threat to the health of the public" that could undermine the state's law barring tobacco use in public buildings and most businesses.

Information from: Star Tribune, <http://www.startribune.com>

AP-WF-03-26-14 1335GMT

Liquor Sales

BC-MN-XGR--Sunday Liquor Sales,128

Minn. Senate panel to consider Sun. alcohol sales

Eds: APNewsNow.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - Minnesota state senators are ready to reveal a wide-ranging liquor proposal expected to allow some Sunday alcohol sales.

The legislation before the Senate Commerce Committee on Wednesday is unlikely to allow liquor-store owners to open for business on Sunday.

Two bills have been making headway that would loosen the state's Sunday alcohol-sale ban. One would allow the sale of 64-ounce beer containers called "growlers." The second would open small brewers' taprooms.

Supporters of the changes say they would benefit Minnesota's burgeoning craft-beer brewing industry.

Gov. Mark Dayton said earlier this year that he'd sign a bill that completely repealed the Sunday prohibition. But that idea never gained enough traction among lawmakers.

Many small liquor store owners oppose being open on Sundays because they say costs would outweigh profits.

AP-WF-03-26-14 0906GMT

MINNESOTA CONGRESSMAN COLLIN PETERSON TELLS KFGO NEWS HE WILL SEEK A 13TH TERM. THE ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY ENDS MONTHS OF SPECULATION WHETHER THE 7TH DISTRICT DEMOCRAT WOULD SEEK RE-ELECTION. PETERSON SAYS THERE'S PLENTY OF WORK YET TO DO, IMPLEMENTING THE FARM BILL, FLOOD RETENTION PROJECTS, AND THE HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION BILL TO NAME JUST A FEW. PETERSON EXPECTS HIS RACE WILL BE TARGETED BY REPUBLICANS:

>Media : PETERSON ANNOUNCES

Length: 00:00:28.3 OutCue: 'WE NEED YOU THERE'.<PSI_END_OBJECT>

STATE SENATOR TORREY WESTROM OF ELBOW LAKE IS THE ONLY REPUBLICAN TO ANNOUNCE A CHALLENGE TO PETERSON.

3/17/14 DONTOMASHANEY

MN to Offer Enhanced DL at Some Locations

2-11-14

Minnesota is the fifth state in the U.S. to begin offering enhanced driver's licenses and identification cards, making traveling to some destinations a little more convenient. The dual-purpose cards allow Minnesotans to re-enter the U.S. by land or sea from Canada, Bermuda, Mexico and the Caribbean without a passport.

The enhanced cards allow border patrol agents to verify cardholder identity and citizenship through Radio Frequency Identification that points to information in a Department of Homeland Security database.

Applications will be accepted beginning next Monday at 14 Driver and Vehicle Services stations, which include: Anoka, Arden Hills, Austin, Bemidji, Detroit Lakes, Duluth, Eagan, Hastings, Mankato, Plymouth, Rochester, St. Cloud, St. Paul and Virginia.

Applicants must be at least 16 years old, and both a U.S. citizen and Minnesota resident.

The cost is \$15 in addition to the regular license fees. Applications are expected to take 2-4 weeks to process.

Other states offering enhanced driver's licenses and ID cards are New York, Vermont, Michigan and Washington.

-JAm-

Area Caucuses Held This Week

2-4-14

Most precinct caucuses are today. In Fergus Falls; both Republican and DFL will hold caucuses at the Kennedy Middle School. They start at 7 pm Tuesday. Independence Party will hold theirs live online on the website MNIP.org also starting at 7 pm Tuesday.

In an email, the Libertarian Party sent a notice that their caucus will be Friday, 7 pm at The Spot in Fergus Falls.

Check the Secretary of State website for other locations, in our listening area they include: the Battle Lake City Hall, Henning High School, New York Mills County Government Center, Parkers Prairie High School, Pelican Rapids Public Library, Perham Middle School, Perham

MINNESOTA REPUBLICAN STATE SENATOR TORREY WESTROM, WHO WANTS CONGRESSMAN COLLIN PETERSON'S JOB, PLANS TO ATTEND TONIGHT'S PARTY CAUCUS IN MOORHEAD. WESTROM, WHO'S FROM ELBOW LAKE, IS AN ATTORNEY AND 16-YEAR VETERAN OF THE STATE CAPITOL. WESTROM SAYS IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE.....

></Description></Media2><PSI_MID_OBJECT>Media : WESTROM
RACE
Length: 00:00:16.1 OutCue: "TO DO THIS" .<PSI_END_OBJECT>

PETERSON IS THE RANKING DEMOCRAT - AND FORMER CHAIRMAN - ON THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE. HE HASN'T FORMALLY ANNOUNCED WHETHER HE'LL SEEK RE-ELECTION, BUT HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING NANCY PELOSI, RECENTLY HELD A FUNDRAISER TO BOOST HIS CAMPAIGN.

BA 2/4/14 10:45AM

Moorhead 7:15pm

FF 8:30pm

Nelson Says Franson Not Representing Republican Platform

1-31-14

Sue Nelson of rural Perham has announced her intention to seek the Republican endorsement for Minnesota House District 8B.

Republican Mary Franson of Alexandria is the District 8B incumbent.

Nelson says she was asked to run against Franson because Franson is not following the Republican platform on all issues. One example is civil unions:

:16

"For example the Marriage Amendment in 8B was a 67% vote 'yes' for the Marriage Amendment, she has her name on a civil unions bill."

The precinct caucuses for all political parties are Tuesday (February 4th) at 7 pm. Where you attend is based on your address. Go to the Secretary of State website for the listings. <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=886>.

BC-MN--Dayton-Super Bowl,130

Dayton drops out of NFL trip to focus on propane

Eds: APNewsNow.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - Gov. Mark Dayton will not be part of the Minnesota group traveling to New Jersey this weekend to lobby NFL officials for a Minnesota Super Bowl in 2018.

Dayton's office said Tuesday the governor is staying in Minnesota to deal with a propane shortage. Dayton plans to convene an emergency meeting of the state's Executive Council, which he will ask to extend a five-day emergency order that he implemented Monday.

Dayton had planned to join business and community leaders pitching Minneapolis as a 2018 Super Bowl site to NFL officials gathered for the Super Bowl in East Rutherford, N.J. Dayton's spokesman says the rest of the group is still going.

Dayton's order authorizes a number of steps by Minnesota's Public Safety Department and Adjutant General to respond to propane shortages.

AP-WF-01-28-14 2307GMT

BC-MN--Vikings Stadium ,135

Demand for skilled workers will be high

Eds: APNewsNow.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) - Demand for skilled workers to build the new Minnesota Vikings stadium has already begun, even though the old Metrodome is far from demolished.

Summit Academy OIC is a nonprofit education and vocational training center that's assisting in the hiring process. CEO Louis King says the Sports Facility Authority, Mortenson Construction and the Vikings have provided \$800,000 for worker training.

The Sports Facilities Authority expects employment to peak at 1,000 between April and August of 2015. King tells KSTP-TV (<http://bit.ly/111cAvS>) the stadium isn't the only large scale project in the area, so demand for skilled workers will be high. Projects underway, or about to begin, include the St. Paul Saints stadium, the St. Croix (kroy) River bridge and light rail construction.

King says his center has an initial job order for 100 skilled trade workers.

Information from: KSTP-TV, <http://www.kstp.com>

AP-WF-01-23-14 1359GMT

BC-MN-- Vikings Stadium, 1st Ld-Writethru,90

URGENT

Minn. Supreme Court dismisses Vikings stadium suit

Eds: APNewsNow. Will be updated.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - Minnesota's Supreme Court has dismissed a lawsuit challenging the funding plan for a new Vikings football stadium.

The decision Tuesday clears a late obstacle that threatened to hold up construction and delay a planned 2016 opening. Minnesota finance officials postponed a \$468 million bond sale while the case was pending.

It was filed Jan. 10 by a former Minneapolis mayoral candidate who argued the stadium funding was unconstitutional.

The stadium will be built on the Metrodome site.

State lawmakers authorized construction in 2012. Taxpayers are footing about half the cost.

AP-WF-01-21-14 2126GMT

*6320 AP-MN--Warehouse Sales Tax,137

New warehouse sales tax gets another look

(Eds: APNewsNow.)

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - New guidelines on a state warehouse sales tax are adding fuel to a campaign to repeal it.

Minnesota lawmakers passed the tax seven months ago. It applies to any businesses buying storage or warehouse services from another entity. A business would not be taxed for using its own warehouse.

The Department of Revenue has now issued guidelines on the tax, which is expected to raise more than \$95 million over the remainder of the current budget cycle. Taxable services include the storage of documents, coal, hazardous waste, lumber and liquor.

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce tax director Beth Kadoun is working to repeal the tax before it goes into effect April 1. Kadoun tells Minnesota Public Radio News (<http://bit.ly/1di7a1B>) the chamber has heard from companies that won't do business in Minnesota if the tax goes into effect.

Information from: Minnesota Public Radio News, <http://www.mprnews.org>

AP-WF-01-09-14 1458GMT

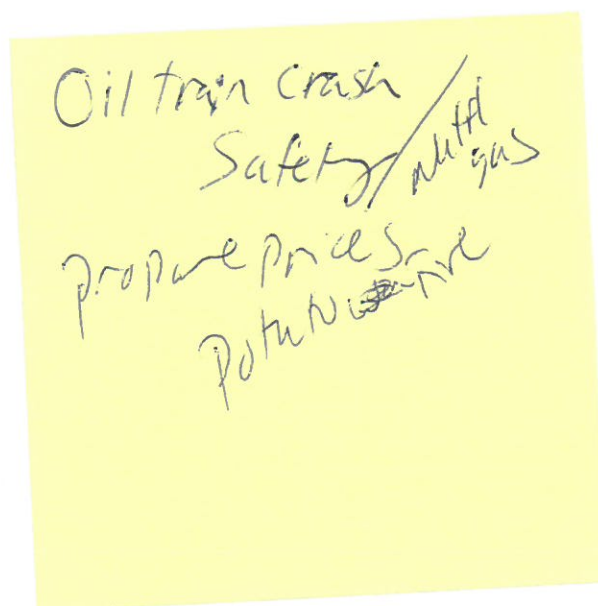
THE FIRE CHIEF OF CASSELTON RECOUNTED DECEMBER'S OIL CAR TRAIN DERAILMENT AND MULTIPLE EXPLOSIONS TO A U-S SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE. TIM MCLEAN WAS INVITED TO WASHINGTON BY SENATOR HEIDI HEITKAMP. MCLEAN TOLD A HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE, EXTENSIVE TRAINING FOR HIS DEPARTMENT PAID OFF.

Media : MCLEAN TESTIMONY

Length: 00:00:17.0 OutCue: "OPERATIONS CENTER".<PSI_END_OBJECT>

MCLEAN ALSO TOLD THE LAWMAKERS THAT EQUIPMENT PURCHASED WITH FEDERAL GRANT MONEY WAS CRITICAL IN THE RESPONSE. HEITKAMP SAYS SHE THINKS MCLEAN'S TESTIMONY HAD AN INCREDIBLE EFFECT ON THE MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE.

JURGENS 3-25-14 3:23PM



FARGO (KFGO-AM) -- Cass County has submitted a bill to BNSF Railway for its costs related to the December train derailment on the edge of Casselton.

Auditor Mike Montplaisir says it would cover overtime for the sheriff's office and road department. The county is asking for about \$33,000 in reimbursement.

Montplaisir says he expects that the railroad will pay the bill after the county signs a release.

BC-ND--Rail Safety-Casselton, 1st Ld-Writethru,130

Casselton chief says force's response saved lives

Eds: Updates to reflect hearing. Adds byline. Changes dateline. Will be updated. APNewsNow.

By HENRY C. JACKSON

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) - The fire chief of an eastern North Dakota town says "about everything went right" with his force's response to a fiery train derailment because they had properly planned for disasters.

Casselton Fire Chief Tim McLean says the Dec. 30 derailment could have been a deadly incident and credits training and federal financial support. He spoke to a Senate subcommittee on Tuesday at the invitation of Sen. Heidi Heitkamp.

An oil train collided with a grain car outside of Casselton on Dec. 30 sparking explosions and a smoke plume that hung over the town of about 2,400 residents. There were no injuries, but about 1,400 people voluntarily evacuated.

Many have since expressed concerns about shipping oil by rail and what would happen if an accident occurred in a more populated area.

AP-WF-03-25-14 2119GMT

RAILROADS AND THE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
HAVE REACHED AN AGREEMENT TO ADOPT VOLUNTARY SAFETY
MEASURES FOR OIL TRAINS.

Media : CASSELTON CHAOS

Length: 00:00:13.0 OutCue: "CAR TO CAR"

fades.<PSI_END_OBJECT>

THE DEAL FOLLOWS A SERIES OF EXPLOSIVE DERAILEMENTS,
INCLUDING THE DECEMBER 31ST DERAILEMENT AND MULTIPLE
EXPLOSIONS ON THE WEST EDGE OF CASSELTON. RAILROADS
WILL LOWER SPEEDS THROUGH MAJOR CITIES, INCREASE TRACK
INSPECTIONS AND DO MORE TO IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE
PLANNING. ETHANOL TRAINS ARE NOT PART OF THE AGREEMENT.

JURGENS 2-21-14 11:45AM (ap)

FF K-9 and Officer Top Team in Trials

2-12-14

Twenty dogs competed in K-9 Narcotic Trials in West Fargo last weekend. Among them was Officer Connor West and K-9 Exel.

The teams had to find narcotics hidden in a room and a vehicle. Each team was scored. Exel and West received the top score out of the 20 teams.

NO ONE WHO USES PROPANE TO HEAT IS IMMUNE FROM THE SHORTAGE THAT HAS SPIKED PRICES:

<

>Media : COLLIN STICKER SHOCK

Length: 00:00:11.8 OutCue: "dollars and nine cents".<PSI_END_OBJECT>

MINNESOTA CONGRESSMAN COLLIN PETERSON BACK IN THE 7TH DISTRICT REACTING TO THE STICKER SHOCK AT HIS HOME. HE SAYS TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE SHORTAGE:

OutCue><Description></Description></Media2><PSI_MID_OBJECT>Media : PETE SHORTAGE

Length: 00:00:22.2 OutCue: "commission".<PSI_END_OBJECT>

PETERSON SAYS HIS OFFICE HAS BEEN GETTING LOTS OF DISTRESS CALLS FROM CONSTITUENTS ABOUT THE SITUATION AND HIS PRIMARY CONCERN IS WORKING ON A SOLUTION TO EASE THE SHORTAGE.

2/10/14 DONTTHOMAS

Propane shortage

BC-ND--Propane Shortage-Death, 1st Ld-Writethru, 130

Woman dies in Dakotas with no propane to heat home

Eds: Rewrites story and headlines to reflect that death has not been specifically tied to lack of propane. APNewsNow.

FORT YATES, N.D. (AP) - A woman has been found dead in her home with an empty propane tank on the Standing Rock Reservation in the Dakotas.

Tribal and Sioux County authorities told ~~The Bismarck Tribune~~ and ~~KXMB-TV~~ that Debbie Dogskin was found dead on Tuesday morning in a Fort Yates mobile home. She was in her early 50s.

Authorities haven't specifically tied Dogskin's death to a lack of propane, but the overnight low temperature dropped to about zero that day. A cause of death was not announced and the Bureau of Indian Affairs declined comment.

The tribe has declared a state of emergency because about 5,000 homes on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border are heated by propane. The fuel has more than doubled in price because of a nationwide shortage.

AP-WF-02-05-14 1359GMT

1/13/

BC-MN--Propane Shortage-Minnesota ,128
Farmers encouraged to sell excess propane
Eds: APNewsNow.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - Minnesota's agriculture commissioner and propane industry officials are encouraging state farmers with a surplus of the fuel to sell it back to suppliers.

Commissioner Dave Frederickson says farmers could help minimize the impact of the critical shortage of propane by selling their excess supplies.

Minnesota Propane Association executive director Roger Leider says some propane suppliers in the state have been contacted by farmers and members of the commercial grain industry who want to help. Leider says pumping of farm storage tanks has already started.

Meanwhile, Gov. Mark Dayton has expanded the state's income eligibility for heating assistance from 50 percent to 60 percent of the state's median income. It's expected to help more Minnesotans gain access to financial assistance for the purchase of propane and other heating fuels.

AP-WF-02-05-14 1555GMT

BC-ND--Keystone Pipeline-Bakken,130

Keystone XL waiting list grows for US oil shippers

Eds: APNewsNow. Will be updated.

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - TransCanada Corp. says it has a waiting list of U.S. oil shippers who want to use an onramp to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Canadian company announced three years ago that it secured contracts to move crude from the oilfields of North Dakota and Montana. The proposed \$140 million Bakken Marketlink pipeline would meet with the Keystone XL in eastern Montana.

TransCanada says oil producers in North Dakota and Montana have turned to trains while the Keystone XL has been debated. The company says the domestic oil shippers still have contracts and are committed to moving their product by pipeline.

The proposed Keystone XL cleared a big hurdle last week when the State Department raised no major environmental objections to its construction.

AP-WF-02-04-14 1511GMT

Propane

BC-MN--Propane Shortage-Hotline,110

Propane hotline takes over 80 calls on Day 1

Eds: APNewsNow. Refiles for online points.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - Minnesota officials have set up a public hotline to help residents deal with propane issues during an ongoing shortage.

The State Emergency Operations Center says the hotline will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

It is staffed with experts who can provide information about energy assistance programs, connect callers with resources, and provide other information.

Residents who have questions about the propane situation or who are in danger of running out of heating fuel can call (651) 297-1304 in the metro area or (800) 657-3504 in greater Minnesota.

Officials say the hotline already fielded more than 80 calls on its first day of operation Thursday.

*You can also call Ottertail County Emergency Management
at 218-998-8067*

AP-WF-01-31-14 1505GMT

BC-MN--Propane Shortage-Minnesota,129

Minn. agencies respond to propane shortage

Eds: APNewsNow.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - Minnesota agencies are getting ready to respond should any households run out of fuel as propane supplies are stretched during this persistent cold weather.

The state Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division says there are currently no requests for state assistance. But officials held a conference call Tuesday with emergency managers from all 87 counties to make sure authorities are ready.

Gov. Mark Dayton declared a State of Peacetime Emergency on Monday, after propane prices have drastically increased.

Meanwhile, Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman says crisis payments for those who qualify for assistance are increasing from \$500 to \$1,000.

The Salvation Army has also added \$100,000 into its heating assistance program to help those in need. The Salvation Army says requests for aid have increased, threatening to drain its reserves.

AP-WF-01-28-14 2242GMT

southern Minnesota.

He says several sheriffs asked for help from the Minnesota National Guard to recover and shelter stranded motorists.

DAYTON-PROPANE SHORTAGE

Dayton declares emergency over propane shortage

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton has declared a state of emergency because of a severe shortage of propane and other home heating fuels statewide.

Dayton issued the emergency order Monday. The order calls on the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to activate the Minnesota Emergency Operations Plan.

State agencies also will be directed to help local governments respond to and recover from the emergency.

~~Minnesota's adjutant general also will be able to order any military forces to active duty to provide emergency relief.~~

Dayton also instructed Minnesota's commerce commissioner to use his consumer protection authority to help guard Minnesotans from price gouging.

The governor plans to meet with propane industry suppliers Tuesday to discuss the shortage and how to improve Minnesota's propane supply.

TACONITE MINE EXPANSION

Court: Minn. mine expansion doesn't need new study

(Information in the following story is from: Star Tribune, <http://www.startribune.com>)

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — The Minnesota Court of Appeals says one of the state's largest taconite mines does not need a new environmental study to expand and keep operating for another 16 years.

The Star Tribune reports a three-judge panel ruled Monday that a lengthy environmental impact study is not needed for U.S. Steel to add 483 acres to its Minntac iron ore mine.

The mine and its processing plant began operating in 1967 and have expanded twice before. The latest proposal would allow the mine to expand again and maintain its current rate of production until 2031 instead of closing in 2015.

The Department of Natural Resources said last April a longer environmental impact statement was not necessary.

An environmental group argued a more comprehensive study was needed to protect nearby waterways.

TIMBERWOLVES-BULLS

More Details Released in Possible Officer Impersonation

1-30-14

More details released by the sheriff's office on someone impersonating an officer. A teenage girl reported someone on Hwy 78 stopped her Tuesday between 11 pm and midnight. A two separate lights were displayed, a red one and a blue one. The vehicle is described as a dark four-door sedan. The man was wearing dark blue or black uniform but she did not see a badge or name tag. The man was not wearing a coat and had the sleeves pushed up.

The man told her he stopped her for a tail light out. She asked him what his jurisdiction was and he did not answer but stared at her. She told him she knew all her lights were working so she drove away. She told a parent what happened and they contacted Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff's office was unable to find any officer working in this area at the time that made the traffic stop. They are investigating it as a possible officer impersonation case.

Propane

BC-MN--Propane Shortage-Hotline,110

Propane hotline takes over 80 calls on Day 1

Eds: APNewsNow.

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Officials say the hotline already fielded more than 80 calls on its first day of operation Thursday.

AP-WF-01-31-14 1008GMT

Rail shortage

BC-ND--Sugar Slowdown,128

Crystal CEO says rail slowdown could cost millions

Eds: APNewsNow. Will be updated.

FARGO, N.D. (AP) - American Crystal Sugar Co. officials say they're worried that a slowdown in rail service could cost the company millions of dollars if it continues to disrupt production.

The cooperative says it plans to scale back on output at three of its plants because it's running out of storage space waiting for rail cars.

BNSF spokeswoman Amy McBeth says service is being impacted by "extreme cold and winter weather conditions" in the Midwest, and the railway has put a priority on serving Crystal Sugar.

Crystal CEO David Berg says he understands that weather can be a problem but adds that it's not a "new phenomenon" in the Northern Plains and increased oil traffic has made it a "bigger pinch."

Berg says Crystal does not have another viable transportation option.

AP-WF-01-29-14 2045GMT

Propane Shortage

BC-ND--Propane Shortage-Reservation, 2nd Ld-Writethru,130

Dakotas tribe opens shelters amid propane shortage

Eds: Updates with comments from tribal officials. APNewsNow. Will be updated.

FORT YATES, N.D. (AP) - The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has opened shelters for people without adequate heat due to a propane shortage exacerbated by recent cold weather.

The reservation straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border. The tribe has opened shelters in Fort Yates on the North Dakota side and in Wakpala on the South Dakota side.

The American Red Cross is providing meals at both locations, along with cots and blankets.

Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault (AR'-sham-boh) II says it's a potential life-or-death situation. He says about 90 percent of the 5,500 homes on the reservation are heated by propane.

Tribal Emergency Management Director Elliott Ward says only a handful of people have used the shelters so far, but both he and Archambault expect the number to increase. About 10,000 people live on the reservation.

AP-WF-01-29-14 1517GMT

Rail Shortage

BC-ND--Amtrak-Buses, 63

Buses take place of Amtrak train in part of ND

Eds: APNewsNow.

DEVILS LAKE, N.D. (AP) - Westbound passengers on Amtrak's Empire Builder line at Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Rugby are completing part of their trip by bus this week.

Spokesman ~~Marc Magliari~~ tells KZZY radio that the bus is taking the place of the train between Fargo and Minot, because of traffic demands. Amtrak uses BNSF Railway track.

~~Magliari~~ says the busing is expected to continue until Sunday.

Information from: KZZY-FM, <http://lrradioworks.com>

AP-WF-01-29-14 1548GMT

Rail Shortage

Plains oil shipments disrupting Amtrak trains

★ CHICAGO (AP) - An increase in rail shipments of oil crude from the northern Plains is being partly blamed for disruptions to an Amtrak route linking Chicago and the West Coast.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers wrote to U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx this week urging him to intervene.

Amtrak's Empire Builder service runs along a BNSF Railway route that has seen an increase in oil shipments from the Bakken region of North Dakota and Montana.

Winter weather has exacerbated several months of disruptions. Westbound Amtrak trains this week have had to bypass stops across much of North Dakota. Delays have reached up to 10 hours.

A BNSF spokeswoman could not be reached.

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari says BNSF has said disruptions could continue for months.

OIL LEASES-NORTH DAKOTA

BLM oil, gas leases in North Dakota fetch \$17.5M

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - The Bureau of Land Management says its most recent sale of oil and gas leases in North Dakota totaled more than \$17.5 million.

BLM says 40 federal leases were sold Wednesday.

The agency says Williston-based Diamond Resources Company submitted a record high bid of \$34,000 for each acre in a 53-acre parcel in Mountrail County.

Diamond Resources also purchased the highest single-parcel bid at more than \$5 million for a 152-acre parcel in Mountrail County.

Competitive oil and gas lease sales are conducted at the BLM's Montana state office in Billings. Money from the sales is shared with states and counties. All leases are issued for a 10-year term.

NATURAL GAS CAPTURE

contd...

City of FF Rates Discussed but No Action Taken

1-29-14

Fergus Falls City Finance Director Bill Sonmor presented an analysis of the utility rates. He explained in detail to the Finance, Personnel and Development Committee what each fund: refuse, water, sewer, and storm water is used for, the cash balance and explained some needed improvements. Based the analysis he recommends a 5.1percent increase in the 2014 rates or about \$4.28 in the example bill. The committee took no action and it will be discussed again because some council members were not able to attend the meeting.

Natural Gas Customers Can Resume Normal Usage

1-27-14

Great Plains Natural Gas customers can return to normal usage immediately. Saturday they issued a press release asking customers to turn down their thermostats and to conserve natural gas after a transmission supply line was disrupted. Frank Morehouse, President and CEO of Great Plains says "We want to thank your customers of responding to our request....The reduced usage by our customers as well as the customers of the other utilities affected by the supply disruption played an integral role in maintaining service until operations returned to normal."

*6390 AP-ND--Natural Gas-ND,129

ND state agencies monitoring natural gas situation

Eds: APNewsNow.

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - Gov. Jack Dalrymple says state agencies are monitoring natural gas supplies in eastern North Dakota.

Xcel Energy is asking customers in North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin to conserve natural gas after a Saturday pipeline explosion in Manitoba.

Dalrymple says state officials are working with local officials, health care providers and utilities in eastern North Dakota on contingency plans should there be heat shortages. He says the National Guard and Highway Patrol are ready to respond if needed.

Xcel says one of three pipelines that have been out of service is being returned to service and should reach full capacity by Monday afternoon. But spokesman Kent Larson says things won't be back to normal until the gas is delivered to the region, and demand remains high due to subzero temperatures.

AP-WF-01-27-14 1248GMT

BC-MN--Xcel-Conserve Gas,93

Xcel: 1 of 3 gas pipelines should be back soon

Eds: APNewsNow.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) - Xcel Energy says it expects one of three natural gas pipelines knocked out by an explosion in Canada will be back at full capacity by Monday afternoon.

But the Minneapolis-based utility is still asking its customers in parts of North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin to conserve by turning down heat and avoiding using appliances that burn natural gas.

Spokeswoman Mary Sandok says it's clear customers responded when the conservation appeal went out following the explosion Saturday.

The call for conservation came just as much of the territory confronted another stretch of bitter cold.

AP-WF-01-27-14 1248GMT

FERGUS FALLS, MINN. - Jan. 26, 2014 - Great Plains Natural Gas Co. is asking its residential and commercial natural gas customers to reduce usage as much as possible until further notice. A rupture occurred on a Canadian natural gas transmission line that supplies gas to the Viking Gas Transmission Company, which serves Great Plains customers in Crookston, Vergas, Pelican Rapids, Fergus Falls and Breckenridge, Minn., as well as Wahpeton, N.D.

Depending on how long it takes to repair the line and resume natural gas flow, the supply of natural gas downstream is limited.

According to Bob Morman, director of gas supply for Great Plains Natural Gas, customers can help conserve by lowering thermostats to 60 degrees, lower if possible, and avoid using any other natural gas appliance, such as a cook top oven, fire place and clothes dryer.

Great Plains will provide updates as additional information becomes available.

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Safety

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I-94 FROM BISMARCK TO THE ALEXANDRIA AREA AND I-29 FROM TH CANADIAN BORDER INTO SOUTH DAKOTA HAS REOPENED. (7AM).

NORTH DAKOTA DOT SUPERVISOR BRUCE NORD SAYS IT'S NO EASY TASK TO GET HUNDREDS OF MILES OF INTERSTATE ACROSS AS MANY AS THREE STATES SHUT DOWN YESTERDAY AT THE HEIGHT OF THE BLIZZARD.

><PSI_MID_OBJECT>Media : BRUCIE COORDINATION
Length: 00:00:30.5 OutCue: "STILL CLOSED".<PSI_END_OBJECT>

NORD SAYS COMPLICATING THE RE-OPENING WERE STALLED VEHICLES THAT HAD TO BE REMOVED BEFORE PLOWS COULD CLEAR THE ROADWAYS.

1/27/14 DTH

*6320 AP-MN--Propane Squeeze,127

Propane prices a concern for some in Minn.

Eds: APNewsNow. Will be updated

MANKATO, Minn. (AP) - Rising propane prices are worrying many rural Minnesota residents who count on the fuel to heat their homes amid a bitterly cold winter.

~~KTOE~~ News in Mankato reports Monday ~~that~~ suppliers in the area were quoting propane prices of \$4.75 a gallon by the end of last week (<http://bit.ly/1b0UQHo>). That's compared to \$1.59 a gallon a year ago.

That means a bill of about \$1,000 to fill a 200 gallon tank. One customer ~~tells KTOE~~ a tank that size only lasts about three weeks in current weather conditions.

Minnesota Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman says Texas recently opened its borders to propane trucks from a number of states including Minnesota. Federal and state lawmakers have been seeking answers in recent weeks for propane price spikes and supply problems.

Information from: KTOE-AM, <http://www.ktoe.com>

AP-WF-01-27-14 1546GMT

- Safety - Kill Switch

BC-MN--Klobuchar-Kill Switch,113

Klobuchar visits U of M to highlight 'kill switch'

Eds: APNewsNow.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) - U.S. Sen Amy Klobuchar will visit the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis to discuss ways to increase student safety.

There were 25 reported robberies on campus during the fall semester, many of them targeting cell phones and laptop computers.

As students return to campus from winter break on Tuesday, Klobuchar will speak at Coffman Union, where she will highlight her proposed federal "kill switch" legislation, which would enable cell phone theft victims to render their phones inoperable to thieves and wipe their personal and financial information from the device.

Joining Klobuchar to discuss the spike in campus crime will be Minneapolis Police Chief Janee Harteau and University of Minnesota Police Chief Greg Hestness.

AP-WF-01-21-14 1004GMT

Truck Hauling Logs Rolls

1-15-14

A semi-truck had problems on a turn near Perham. The sheriff's office says the truck was on a minimum maintenance road near the intersection of 505th Avenue and Co Hwy 8. As the truck made the turn unto Co Rd 8 the rear tires went into the ditch causing the truck to roll. The semi hauling logs was on it's side. A tow truck and commercial vehicle inspector were called to the scene. No injuries were reported.

Battle Lake Info Meetings on Natural Gas

1-15-13

The city of Battle Lake will hold two meetings on the natural gas sign up. Meetings are set for Thursday, January 16 from 3 to 6 pm and Wednesday, January 22nd from 6 to 8 pm. Both public meetings are at the Battle Lake city hall. Residents within the proposed Battle Lake natural gas service area can sign up for the service and will save more than \$1400 by getting the service now. Potential savings on heating costs will be discussed and other questions answered.

The form to sign up for service is available on the city website or one can be picked up at city hall. Deadline for sign up has been extended to February 18th.

Otter Tail Power Watching Coal Situation as ND Power Plant Struggles to Get Coal

1-8-13

Basin Electric Power Cooperative says it has turned to trucks to help haul coal in western North Dakota because rail shipments can't keep up.

A fleet of dump trucks has been running up and down Highway 200 supplementing coal deliveries that can't be met by rail shipments.

Basin spokesman Curt Pearson says trucks are making up to 250 trips daily to keep up with what can be normally delivered in two train loads.

Cris Oehler Vice President of Public Relations for Otter Tail Power Company says, "We have been receiving enough coal to keep the plants operating but are watching the situation very closely. BNSF is having delivery difficulties throughout their northern system, which affects Hoot Lake Plant. The cold weather is adding to problems with frozen coal being difficult to unload. The derailment at Casselton also contributed to delayed train movements in the region. But BNSF is working with Hoot Lake Plant staff and, so far, the plant has been close to keeping up. In addition, Hoot Lake Plant has an emergency coal stockpile to help manage situations like this."

BC-ND--Derailment-GOP Flap,122

ND GOP chairman's comments on oil cause stir

Eds: APNewsNow.

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - Some North Dakota Republican lawmakers say they're disappointed in comments made by the state party chairman calling for a slowdown in oil drilling in the western oil patch.

Chairman Robert Harms made the comment last week after an oil train derailed and caught fire on the outskirts of Casselton. He told The Bismarck Tribune (~~<http://bit.ly/1dsyPBr>~~) that he was voicing a personal opinion - and not speaking on behalf of the party.

But some members of the Republican caucus say Harms' comment was interpreted as being on behalf of the party. Senate Majority Leader Rich Wardner says the comment doesn't reflect his views.

Wardner says he hopes party members can resolve the flap through internal discussions so it doesn't lead to division.

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

AP-WF-01-07-14 1307GMT