

Health & Welfare

Consumer Advisory-Fergus Locker

09-10-15

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Fergus Locker Plant, LLC, of Fergus Falls, have issued a consumer advisory for pork links that were produced without the benefit of state inspection and do not have the necessary records to document the product was produced according to state and federal regulations. The violation was discovered during a routine daily inspection by the MDA.

The pork links were produced on July 31st and were sold during the month of August at Fergus Locker Plant and Lakeway Market. The product label includes "Lot #731" and "Establishment #843" located inside the State of Minnesota mark of inspection. Consumers who purchased this product from the two locations during August should return it to the place of purchase.

The MDA and the locker plant have received no reports of illness due to consumption of the product. Anyone who consumed the product and may be concerned about illness should contact their healthcare provider.

Consumers with questions are asked to contact Brent Schmitz at Fergus Locker Plant.

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PR Groundbreaking

09-15-15

Spades turned up some dirt on the front lawn of the Pelican Valley Nursing Home in Pelican Rapids Monday. That will be the location of a new \$3.6 million nursing home, celebrated with a groundbreaking ceremony.

The new building will be part 1 of a two-part project. The new building will allow the nursing home to maintain its 36-bed nursing home size, but with more room for residents.

Barbara Garrity is the Executive Director of the Pelican Valley Health Center...

... "upgraded amenities." :09

The second phase of the project will be to gut the existing nursing home and modernize it.

Work on phase one will begin within two weeks. It will take about a year to finish.

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Food Shelves Harvest

09-08-15

After months of labor, the harvest is bountiful in many home gardens across the state and a growing amount of that fresh produce is going to families in need. The Harvest Campaign from Minnesota FoodShare seeks to get locally-grown produce and other healthy offerings to food shelves across the state. Program Coordinator Courtney Zaato notes that food isn't just a quick fix for a growling belly, but also building blocks for a healthy future.

Cut 43108 :17 *"People who are visiting food shelves are disproportionately affected by diet-related illnesses, like high blood pressure, diabetes, even dental problems. So, we really want to get the word out that the food that's coming into food shelves really needs to be high quality – the kind of foods that you would want to feed your family."*

The Harvest Campaign runs through the end of September and includes nearly 70 participating food shelves. In addition to home gardeners, there also are businesses taking part in the Harvest Campaign along with dozens of churches across Minnesota. One is the First Congregational Church in Dodge Center, where Sara Osborn says they've already donated more than a ton of fresh produce from their half-acre garden.

Cut 44108 :12 *"There's a lot of people that don't have enough food, and this is just our way of giving back to our community. It's good fellowship for the church too. We have a good time out there, even though we're working hard. It is a lot of fun."*

Later this month, congregations statewide will be encouraged to bring local produce and healthy food or monetary donations to their places of worship to go toward families struggling with hunger. The "Pack the Pews" event is set for September 18th, 19th and 20th.

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Beginning Farmers

08-22-15

With the growing number of Minnesotans who are seeking out fresh and locally produced foods, the landscape of the state's agriculture industry is also changing with a bounty of new faces. The most recent Census of Agriculture shows that 17 percent of all principal operators in Minnesota have run their farm for ten-years or less. With the average age of a farmer in the state nearing 60, those beginning farmers are much needed, says Richard Ness with the Land Stewardship Project...

... "opportunities out there." :17 (Farmers-1)

According to the U-S-D-A, the country's local food sales have been growing twice as fast as total agricultural sales since the early 1990s. Over many years of that upward trend, the Land Stewardship Project has been helping those who want to get a start in farming with insight and instruction through a Farm Beginnings course. Ness says the key is setting specific goals, having management and marketing plans and connecting with those experienced farmers and related business people who know the ropes...

... "and so forth." :15 (Farmers-2)

7.70

In the past 17 years, more than 700 people have gone through the Farm Beginnings course, and the latest round of classes is set to begin this fall.

Perham Adult Day Services

08-18-15

Perham Living has been notified by the Veteran's Administration that its adult day services is VA approved. Qualifying veterans can now receive adult day services as a paid benefit through the VA.

Janet Severson, Perham Living adult day services coordinator, says providing those services is a round-the-clock job with little, if any, time off. She says, "our adult day services provide loved ones with the care they need and caregivers a much-needed break."

Adult Day Services is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm on the campus at 735 Third Street SW. Perham Living's nursing home services have been VA approved for over a year.

Perham Living's adult day services are the only of its kind in Otter Tail County. The program is licensed with the state of Minnesota and can accommodate 20 participants.

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MNsure Enrollment Centers

07-23-15

Twenty different health insurance agencies located across Minnesota will serve as MNsure Broker Enrollment Centers during the 2016 open enrollment period.

The selected agencies will provide and staff convenient walk-in sites for residents of surrounding communities. Face-to-face assistance from MNsure certified brokers and navigators will be available. The open enrollment period runs from November 1st this year through January 31, 2016.

Area agencies involved include: Breitenfeldt Group in Perham and Midstate Insurance Services in Wadena,

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Code Red To Be Further Refined

07-22-2015

Code Red continues to help Otter Tail County residents be ready for any type of emergency including severe weather like the July 12th storms. 3 Tornado systems moved through Fergus Falls specifically. Most residents got the Code Red alerts at about the same time as people who had heard about the storms through local media and weather radios, however, a few reported a very slight delay. Otter Tail County Emergency Management Director Patrick Waletzko says phone systems locally may have varied...

OUTCUE: "...so we can improve the system."

All involved agree that Code Red is an excellent system, working in conjunction with federal state and local authorities to make the program even more effective. One of the biggest advantages of the system is the ability to target specific cities or even blocks or individual streets within the county alerting those residents to an impending or existing emergency by phone, text, or email. A link for Code Red is available at www.lakesradio.net.

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Alzheimer's Education Program July 28 in Perham
7-22-2015

On Tuesday, July 28th, Gretchen Dobervich, vice-president of the North Dakota Alzheimer's Association, will present a program called "Effective Communication Strategies". This is the final program in an education series sponsored by Perham Health to help people gain more information about dementia and how to navigate the challenges that may accompany this disease. The program begins at 6 p.m. at New Creation Lutheran Church in Perham.

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Richland Wilkin Food Pantry

07-20-15

Much like Old Mother Hubbard, staff at the Richland-Wilkin Food Pantry in Wahpeton are finding it hard to distribute food to needy families from bare shelves.

Pantry Director Karen Stroklund says the pantry is short of many items...

... "completely bare." :11

A "Fill the Bus" promotion will be coming soon. In the meantime, Stroklund encourages area residents to donate either food or money still this month...

... "food or money." :16

In addition to canned goods, the pantry is running low on meat, boxed meals, jelly and peanut butter.

The pantry served 170 families in June. A normal month ranges from 120 to 135.

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FF Recreational Trail Funding

07-20-15

Fergus Falls is in the mix for state start-up funding for a proposed riverwalk trail from Union Avenue downtown to Two Rivers Road on the city's west side.

The city is asking for \$500,000 from the environmental trust fund. But the Legislative/Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources, which recommends projects to the legislature, has only enough money to cover about one-third of the projects requested around Minnesota.

According to Fergus Falls city alderman Rod Spidahl, if the city is successful with the grant, the money could be used for such things as land acquisition...

..."along the river." :09

The commission will notify finalists for further consideration in mid September. Those chosen will make detailed presentations to the commission in late September and early October.

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MnSure Debacle

07-14-15

The chairman of the Minnesota House Health and Human Services Finance Committee says a situation with the state's MnSure program offers further proof that MnSure is being mismanaged.

State Representative Matt Dean reacted to Department of Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson last Friday that 180,000 Minnesotans in Medical Assistance and Minnesotacare are having their renewals delayed.

Dean says Minnesota doesn't know where they are or what to do with those people. MnSure doesn't know about their eligibility and can't re-enroll them, so those people are left in limbo.

Dean says MnSure hasn't sent out one bill in 2015. The state is advising those people not to pay their bill because they haven't gotten to it yet. There's another group of people he's actually more worried about...

..."level of incompetence." :28

State Representative Greg Davids has sent a letter to State Senator Tony Lourey formally requesting a MnSure Legislative Oversight Committee hearing.

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Avian Influenza

09-19-15

As the poultry industry in Minnesota and across the Midwest works to rebound from the spring outbreak of avian influenza, there are predictions that another round of the disease will hit this fall. Dale Wiehoff with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy says while it's still unclear how the disease became so widespread, he notes that avian influenza will likely become a permanent part of industrial poultry production...

..."inside a facility." :17

Nearly 50-million chickens and turkeys in the U-S were lost in the spring outbreak of the H-5-N-2 strain of avian influenza, including nine-million in Minnesota alone. With that unprecedented number of dead birds, Wiehoff says there needs to be a serious review of the safety of the methods of disposal, including incineration, burial and composting...

..."and other animals." :18

Wiehoff says the U-S-D-A's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service just launched a review of how to handle the carcasses from any future outbreaks, which could include prearranged disposal sites.

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Falls Prevention Day

09-22-15

Fall officially arrives in Minnesota on Wednesday and with it, Falls Prevention Awareness Day, calling attention to the frequency and seriousness of falls among older people, and ways to prevent them. It's estimated that one in three people over age 65 takes a major, unexpected tumble at least once a year, and it should signal that a closer look at their fall risk may be in order. A fall risk evaluation includes a person's gait and balance, health conditions, medications and home environment. Dr. Sascha Dublin at Group Health Research Institute says it can be a challenge getting an older relative or friend to agree to this checkup, but it's important to try...

SAW-shuh DUB-lin

... "long as possible." :15

Minnesota has one of the highest fall death rates in the nation, with hundreds of fatalities each year. Dublin recommends preventive steps including exercise, as people age. And not just any exercise, but those that can improve strength, balance and coordination. Tai chi is at the top of her list, but there are others...

tee-CHEE

... "leg muscles." :18

Dublin notes that people who use balance aids such as canes or walkers often need a little training to use them correctly, and may be using a hand-me-down piece of equipment that isn't the right size or height and can put them at greater risk of a fall.

7:30
12pm

Honor Rewards Program

09-24-15

The Otter Tail County Recorder's Office is out with another new internet-enabled program. The program, called "Honor Rewards," seeks to connect veterans to businesses willing to offer special veteran discounts.

Recorder Carol Schmaltz says interested businesses and veterans can go to the same website to register. It's HonorRewards.com...

..."for the discount." :23

Schmaltz says the registration process takes just minutes. The program is for all veterans, regardless of location. Otter Tail is the third county in Minnesota and the only one in this area to offer the program.

If you need more information, you're asked to call the Otter Tail County Recorder's Office.

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Property Fraud Alert Update

09-24-15

A program recently offered by the Otter Tail County Recorder's Office appears to be working as planned.

Recorder Carol Schmaltz says the Property Fraud Alert System notifies people who sign up when property transactions with their names on them are made in the recorder's office.

Schmaltz says people who have already signed up for the fraud alerts are calling her to say the system works as advertised...

..."or it's not." :16

Schmaltz says according to the FBI, property fraud is one of the fastest growing white collar crimes in the U.S.

To sign up, you can go to the Otter Tail County Recorder's Office website or call the toll free number 1-800-728-3858.

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LRH Prepared For Upcoming Flu Season

09-23-15

With the Fall Season starting this week, local healthcare practitioners are getting ready for residents to receive the seasonal flu vaccine. At this point, there is no supply concern. Dr. Allen Magnuson, who is one of the Pediatric Physicians at Lake Region Healthcare and appeared on the Apple A Day program on KBRF recently, says there was a concern last flu season in terms of supply...

MAGNUSON 30 SEC

OUTCUE: "...which seems to be a little unrealistic."

Typically flu season is October 1 through March 31. CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step. People should begin getting vaccinated soon after flu vaccine becomes available, ideally by October, to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating in the community, it's not too late to get vaccinated.

In addition to getting a seasonal flu vaccine, you can take everyday preventive actions like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. If you are sick with flu, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading flu to others.

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New LRHC COO

09-24-15

Lake Region Healthcare has announced a new Chief Operating Officer. She is Lucia Anderson, who also has the role of Chief Nursing Officer.

Anderson has served as the Senior Vice President of Operations and Chief Nurse Executive since 1999. She has served as an LPN and RN on the medical floor, RN in obstetrics, house supervisor, and Director of OB. Anderson is a certified nurse in in-patient obstetrics. She received her LPN degree from M-State, her BSN from Minnesota State University and her MBA from the University of St. Thomas.

Lake Region Healthcare CEO Larry Schulz says Anderson has demonstrated the leadership qualities needed to manage the operational systems at Lake Region. He says her experience in patient care, quality improvement, and systems development are a great fit for the operational leadership needed within the executive team.

Anderson says Lake Region Healthcare has an exceptional team committed to helping people in the region improve their health. She says, "I consider it an honor and a calling to accept this leadership position in an organization that is so passionately committed to developing the workforce and partnerships and making the investments needed to build a healthier community."

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Juvies and Adult Arrested

09-11-15

Two teenagers and an adult were arrested in Fergus Falls Thursday after a resident reported four people with guns behind the community arena at 3:27 pm Thursday, about the time students were getting out of school.

A school resource officer and other officers located two vehicles with two occupants each. They did a search of the vehicles and discovered three air-soft bb guns fashioned like a pistol, shotgun and AR-15 style rifle.

The youths were displaying the guns to each other and didn't point them at anyone. They had been jumping on their own cars, not causing vandalism to other vehicles.

A 15-year-old and 16-year old...both boys, were arrested. Eighteen-year-old Nikolas Taylor Johnson was also arrested. They are charged with gross misdemeanor Brandishing a dangerous weapon on school property.

Police say such guns are very realistic looking, and officers can't possibly know if they're dealing with an actual emergency situation or not, especially on school property. They advise keeping those realistic air soft guns out of sight at all times. If an officer approaches in one of these situations, the gun owners should always follow police commands.

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