

EMPIRIONMENT

Aluminum Sulfate Lawsuit

01-28-16

Fergus Falls is joining a class-action lawsuit against a company that sells aluminum sulfate used to treat water at the city's wastewater treatment facility. The company, General Chemical Corporation, is accused of price-fixing.

Matt Lemke, a supervisor at the wastewater treatment plant, says Fergus Falls has been buying the liquid chemical from the Georgia company since 1997. He says the city buys about 30,000 gallons each year.

Lemke says all the city needs to do is to provide paperwork to the law firm of Gustafson Gluek (GLUCK) in Minneapolis...

..."recouping any costs." :12

Lemke says he's been told that if the lawsuit is successful, the city would stand to gain three times the cost of damages plus the costs to bring the case.

Fergus Falls joins Duluth, East Grand Forks, Rochester, St. Cloud and the Metropolitan Council

NEWS
News 1
News C
7:30
NEWSN

Senator Emphasizes Environmental Grants For Local Projects

02-03-16

Senator Torrey Westrom says there is almost \$50 million available for environmentally based local projects and parks and trails. It is available on a first come-first serve basis and Senator Torrey Westrom is part of the 17 member committee called the Legislative-Citizen Commission On Minnesota Resources...

TORREY WESTROM 30 SEC

OUTCUE: "...so it's a variety of environmental projects."

Request For Proposals or 'RFP's' can be made by individuals or organizations. The Environment and Natural Resources Trust receives its net proceeds from the Minnesota State Lottery.

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MN Water Quality

02-01-16

Flint, Michigan has garnered a lot of national attention over the water problems there, but water quality is a concern for many states, including Minnesota. Later this month Governor Mark Dayton will hold a Water Quality Summit, and this week, the Land Stewardship Project is hosting the first of two talks that center on farming practices to improve Minnesota's waterways while also improving farmland soil. Organizer Doug Nopar hopes they can get farmers talking about new conservation methods...

... "federal farm bill." :14

On Thursday, the group is bringing Jay Fuhrer of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to Plainview. Fuhrer will discuss how his soil health work in North Dakota could work in Minnesota. Some of the ideas being discussed include switching some plantings to cover crops, such as small grains and turnips. Nopar says methods like these can help reduce soil erosion, which can help keep pollutants from running into Minnesota's waterways...

... "next few years." :12

The Land Stewardship Project will also be hosting a second talk February 11th in Lewiston. The cost for either event is ten dollars. More information is available at the project's website.

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Take it to the Box

01-19-16

An Otter Tail County program that seeks to dispose of unwanted and unneeded prescription drugs is continuing its successful outcomes.

The Take it to the Box program allows residents to drop off unwanted and outdated prescription drugs in a secure receptacle at various locations.

Lieutenant of Administrations for the sheriff's office, Barry Fitzgibbons, says 713 pounds of drugs from across the county was collected and properly disposed of in 2015. Since the program began in 2012, 2,200 pounds have been collected.

Fitzgibbons says proper disposal is the key...

... "aren't theirs." :24

Drop off locations are available in Battle Lake, Fergus Falls, Henning, New York Mills, Ottertail, Parker's Prairie, Pelican Rapids, and Perham.

No syringes, needles or sharps are accepted.

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FF Tree Trimming

01-13-16

The Fergus Falls Parks and Recreation manager says he's in favor of bringing back the city's regular tree trimming program.

Steve Plaza told the city council's Public Works and Safety Committee Wednesday (today) that many years ago, the city had a tree trimming program where the city was split into four quarters and each section had trees trimmed every four years.

Plaza says right now, trimming is only done on a case by case basis...

..."and houses." :18

Plaza says the only negative about regular tree trimming is the cost. He'll appear before the committee within a couple of months with cost estimates for a trimming program. Then it will be up to the committee and eventually the city council to decide if trimming is a critical expenditure.

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OTC Trash Sort Results In

01-09-16

The results of the "Trash Sort" from the Otter Tail County Solid Waste Department are in and look somewhat promising and residents are doing a pretty good job, but there is still some work to do. In mid-December four tons of regular garbage from 230 Fergus Falls households was dumped on the floor of the recycling center and volunteers sifted through it separating the recyclables. Solid Waste Public Information and Education Officer Shannon Terry says some things were surprising...

OUTCUE: "...in the trash which was really expected."

Mixed paper, organics, and plastics made up most of the trash. The percentage from the recyclables from the waste stream was roughly 14 percent. This may be evidence that more recyclables are being thrown away than just 25 percent than being recycled curbside. Overall Terry says the data will greatly improve their education efforts going forward.

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Farmers Conservation

01-06-16

Farmers who are interested in helping with land conservation could soon have a new tool – and it isn't a new piece of hardware. The tool is individually-tailored software, designed to help farmers add up the costs and possible financial benefits of converting from traditional crops, like corn and soybeans, to perennial grasses or cover crops, such as oats and turnips. Robin Moore with the "Chippewa 10 Percent Project," says they'll be testing the software with several Minnesota farmers starting this month...

... "beans rotation." :15

This comes as parts of the Chippewa River watershed in western Minnesota face serious challenges from farmland pollution. Moore, who is also with the Land Stewardship Project, says targeting just 10 percent of one of these trouble spots can help reverse damage to the water system. Some farmers are concerned that switching from traditional crops could hurt their profits and risk losing some federal subsidies for growing corn and soybeans. Moore says those concerns are valid, but argues that if farmers start with small changes now, they could see multiple benefits down the line...

... "in that area." :12

left

She adds growing perennial grasses for rotational livestock grazing can help farmers save money because they won't have to mechanically harvest and store feed. Once they are done testing the new cost-projection tool, Moore says they hope to have it publicly available by March. For now, she says they're focused on helping farmers understand the long-term plans for curbing farmland pollution.

Maplewood 2015 visitors Up Significantly

01-05-16

Maplewood almost broke records for 2015, with nearly 137,000 people visiting the park and very close to their record of 140,000 people visiting the park in 2012. With a possible mild winter this year, the numbers are projected to rise even higher. Maplewood sits in a very interesting location where prairie meets the forest, and the glaciers stopped. The glaciers led to the formation of the hills that are such a big part of the park, and the surrounding area. Attendance numbers have been good for most of the winter so far due to unseasonal weather and an extended fall season.

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Noyes Park Donation

01-05-16

The generosity of a Fergus Falls husband and wife continue for the city. Noyes Park was established after Gina Noyes donated land for the project. Once cleared of debris, a walking trail was put in, a picnic shelter was erected and some plantings were put in.

Last night, the city council accepted a generous donation from Gina Noyes of her condominium and contents left in it as well as her car. City Attorney Rolf Nycklemoe...

... "types of donations." :34

The city council, at some point in the future, will decide what to do with the property and money raised from its sale will be put into a restricted fund.

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