

Remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour.



Grand Forks Herald

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2020

State reports Minnesota's first coronavirus case in Ramsey County

By Dana Ferguson
Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — Minnesota health officials on Friday, March 6, confirmed the first case of the coronavirus in the state in an older adult who'd

recently returned from a cruise. The Ramsey County resident tested positive for COVID-19, the illness that develops from the coronavirus, after traveling on a cruise ship where the virus was present. State health officials on Friday afternoon

had few details about the case, which they'd learned had come back positive at 12:40 p.m. Friday. The individual had started to develop symptoms on Feb. 25 and waited to seek care until Thursday, March 5, when they

felt the illness required professional attention, health officials said. And that person has remained largely isolated since returning from the cruise and is now at home recovering

CORONA: Page A7

Deputies will test meth for coronavirus

By Hannah Shirley
Grand Forks Herald

Methamphetamine cannot be contaminated with coronavirus, more accurately known as COVID-19, but the Pembina County Sheriff's Office is willing to test residents' meth just in case.

By Tuesday, March 3, a Feb. 27 Facebook post on the Pembina County Sheriff's Office offering to do just that hadn't yielded anyone coming forward to have meth tested, but the post had been shared more than 1,500 times.

"Basically, it's completely a joke," Pembina County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Marcus Ramsay said. "But if people are willing to get their meth tested, then by all means, we are willing to test them."

If someone did come forward with meth, Ramsay said deputies would likely confiscate the substance, detain the person and do an investigation into where the meth came from and why it was brought forward.

Pembina County Health Agent Rachel Ramsay said that COVID-19 is mainly spread through the air, and while it is possible to contract the virus from touching a contaminated surface, it is unlikely. She said her office had not heard any comments or complaints about the Facebook post.

Dozens of law enforcement agencies across the country have made similar or nearly identical posts since COVID-19 emerged in China late last year. The respiratory illness on Friday, March 6, had surpassed a death toll of 3,200 worldwide.

UND Police Lt. Danny Weigel said that law enforcement agencies often turn to humor on social media in order to gain more engagement on their posts, which can help their messages spread to a wider audience.

"I think they realized that resonates with their audience a little bit better than just, 'wash your hands,'" Weigel said. "And that's it. I think it's a good thing, as long as it's done the right way."

Weigel said being humorous without being insensitive can be a tricky balance to strike, especially with something like COVID-19, which might negatively affect some people. He said it comes down to the agency knowing its audience members and what they will find funny.

On Friday, March 6, the majority of people commenting on the post appeared to be having a laugh.

Hannah Shirley can be reached at hshirley@gfherald.com or on Twitter @byhannahshirley.

To get your Herald:
(701) 780-1215
(800) 811-2580
News tips:
(701) 780-1136
Sports:
(701) 780-1120

For the very latest in news, read the Herald online at gfherald.com.



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

Bonnie Freije, mother of Langdon/Edmore/Munich player Morgan Freije, has been traveling to her daughters' games for the past 15 years.

GIRLS BASKETBALL MOM GEARS UP FOR TOURNAMENTS

By Ann Bailey
Grand Forks Herald

Bonnie Freije has two wardrobes for basketball tournament season.

One is the pile of black and Cardinal red clothes the Edmore, N.D., mom wears to her daughter Morgan's Langdon-Edmore-Munich games. The other is a stack of blue and gold clothes

she puts on when she watches daughter Fallyn play in Montana State University games.

On Friday, March 6, and Saturday, March 7, Freije will be wearing the black and red while she watches Morgan, a sophomore, and her teammates play in the class B girls high school basketball tournament at the Betty Engelstad Sioux Center in Grand Forks.

Late Saturday night, she'll return to Edmore and fly out the next day to Boise, Idaho.

On Tuesday, March 10, Freije will be cheering Fallyn and the rest of the MSU Bobcats in the second round — the 18-1 conference champions got a bye for the first round — of the Big Sky tournament in Boise.

Basketball has long been part of life for Freije, first as a player

on the Fordville High School basketball team, then later on the Jamestown College women's basketball team where she played from 1984-1988, and, finally, as a fan of her daughters' teams.

After 15 years of watching Morgan, Fallyn and their older sister Ashtin play basketball, Freije is used to not only wardrobe changes, but also juggling schedules

and long days traveling by car or airplanes to games.

When the girls were in elementary school, she put miles on her vehicle taking them to basketball games in towns across northeast North Dakota and northwest Minnesota.

"When they were little, I coached all of their traveling teams,"

FREIJE: Page A6

EGF's original sales tax proposal drew skeptics

By Joe Bowen
Grand Forks Herald

When East Grand Forks leaders revisited months' worth of sales tax discussions in about 90 minutes last month, they did so largely on the word

of Mayor Steve Gander, who said two Minnesota Legislators who represent the town in St. Paul were skeptical that the 2% tax city leaders had proposed in January would survive there.

That, then, meant a

scramble to rehash — and slim down — the city's sales tax idea. The months of deliberation that preceded the 2% plan, even if it was a placeholder for some

SALES TAX: Page A5



**NCHC QUARTERFINALS
SINGLE GAME
TICKETS**

MARCH 13-14
MARCH 15 (if necessary)
Adults \$20/\$30 | Youth \$10/\$15

NORTH DAKOTA HOCKEY

FightingHawks.com/NCHCTickets



Inside

Calendar: A2
Classified: C4-7
Comics: C8

Editorial: A4
Nation/World: C1-2
Obituaries: B3

Sports: D
Weather: A2

Year: 140 Issue: 251
Copyright: 2020
Newsstand price:

\$1.50

Use oil money to end property taxes?

ND lawmaker wants voters to decide

By April Baumgarten
Forum News Service

BISMARCK — A North Dakota lawmaker wants voters to decide if the state should abolish property taxes and replace the revenue with other sources, including oil tax money from the Legacy Fund.

But some state leaders fear that using oil tax revenue to permanently eliminate property taxes could put public services at risk if markets decline.

Rep. Rick Becker, R-Bismarck, said Tuesday, March 3, that he plans to submit a proposal to the Secretary of State's Office next week so he and supporters can start collecting signatures for the initiative constitutional measure. The question would need 26,904 signatures by July 6 to appear on the general election ballot on Nov. 3, but Becker said his group has a goal of 35,000.

If the majority of voters approve the measure, it would count toward the 2022 tax season, Becker said. North Dakota would become the first state in the union to eliminate property taxes.

Putting more money into residents' pockets would boost the economy, Becker said, arguing his plan is sustainable.

"They can pay down student debt, or they can buy little Susie her braces, or they can do an upgrade to the house," Becker said of how residents could spend money that would otherwise go toward property taxes. "Whatever it might be, the things that they can do with their own money to better their lives and drive the economy, that's a winning message."

North Dakotans turned down a similar constitutional measure in 2012 with nearly 77% of the vote. But Becker argues that the state now has more revenue coming in from oil and other taxes that can easily replace property taxes.

He noted the Legacy Fund, which was set up in 2011 and has more than \$6.36 billion in its balance. By 2041, the fund that collects money from oil and natural gas revenues is projected to grow to \$27.99 billion.

The state Legislature has been collecting input from residents and organizations on how to spend Legacy Fund earnings, which are projected to be \$368 million in the 2021-23 biennium. That number should jump to \$639 million in the 2023-25 biennium, according to state projections.

Becker estimated residents pay about \$950 million a year in property taxes. He proposed about \$175 million from the Legacy Fund could go to property tax relief each year. "So that still leaves \$75 million to do the other stuff or to put back into principal or to use for research or whatever the pet project might be," Becker said.

He also suggested, among other funding buckets, using \$150 million that would have gone into the budget stabilization fund, which cannot take in anymore money. He noted another \$200 million that could be used is in the margin of error for projecting revenue forecasts.

Gov. Doug Burgum, speaking through his spokesman Mike Nowatzki, and Senate Majority Leader Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, both said they would like to see language for the proposed measure before forming an opinion on it.

Burgum, a Republican, has proposed using a portion of the Legacy Fund earnings to reduce property taxes through "smart growth incentives," Nowatzki said.

"But the governor would have reservations about any plan that, one, relies



Rep. Rick Becker, R-Bismarck.

Mike McCleary / Bismarck Tribune

on tax revenue from a finite resource such as oil that is subject to market volatility as a means to permanently eliminate property tax, and, two, shifts control and spending away from local political subdivisions to the state," Nowatzki said in an email.

Wardner said he was "absolutely opposed" to using the Legacy Fund to eliminate property taxes. He said using that money would leave less for infrastructure and potentially

put some public services at risk of being cut.

"The other big thing is, I cannot believe that we're going to give up local control," he said of the proposed measure. "And if we give up the property tax, then we won't have no local control. The state will decide on how much money each community will get. And if it isn't enough, it will be tough."

Fargo City Commissioner Tony Gehrig, who supports Becker's campaign to get the measure on the

ballot, called those arguments "red herrings." The state would be required to replace property tax revenues if the measure passes, but nothing in the state constitution would give the state government control over how that money is spent, Becker said.

Gehrig said the state should give money to long-term tax relief if it has the funds.

"What better legacy could there be than to use the funds to end property taxes forever?" he asked.

ND voting rights group submits proposal for ballot measure

Forum News Service

BISMARCK — A proposal for a statewide petition in regard to voting rights was submitted to the North Dakota Secretary of State's office on Friday, March 6.

Secretary of State Al Jaeger said in a release that his office has received the proposal, which is the first step to possibly putting the issue before the voters as a ballot measure in the Nov. 3 general election.

Jaeger's office and Attorney General Wayne Stene-

hjem's office will review the submission and must issue a petition title no earlier than Friday, March 13, and no later than Tuesday, March 17.

North Dakota Voters First, a Fargo-based group, is the sponsoring committee of the proposal. In its own press release, the group said there are four provisions in the proposal that will better serve North Dakota voters.

If approved, the measure would require all vot-

ing machines to produce a paper record of every vote cast, require random audits of election results and also allow North Dakota military-overseas voters more time to cast their ballots.

The measure also would move the state to an open primary election system, where all candidates are listed on a single ballot. The four candidates who receive the most votes then advance to the general election, regardless of party affiliation. If no

candidate then secures a majority of the vote in the general election, an instant runoff will be held.

The measure also changes how legislative political boundaries are drawn. Instead of being done at the Legislature, political district maps would be

done by the North Dakota Ethics Commission, a citizen-led group.

"This measure will strengthen election security, increase voter choice, and prevent voting districts from being drawn by politicians for their benefit" said Lois Altenburg,

a spokesperson for North Dakota Voters First, the release.

The committee said it expects to begin collecting the 26,904 signatures needed to place the item on the November ballot once the Secretary of State's office completes its review.

FREIJE

From Page A1

said Freije, noting that the hours in the car to middle school tournaments grew from an hour or two to six because the games were in the Minneapolis area.

During the practices and car rides, Freije worked to instill in her daughters not only basketball skills, but life lessons, emphasizing to them that the sport shouldn't define them as individuals.

"It's something we do, not who we are," she told them. Meanwhile, Freije encouraged the girls to be both competitive and kind.

"If you plow someone over, be the first to pick them up," Freije often advised them.

Another oft-repeated mantra encouraged the girls to be mindful of the big picture: "Have a God day. Be the light."

Because Freije had the chance to coach her

girls in basketball and on life, and because of the friendships she had with the other parents, she didn't mind the long days of travel during the girls' elementary and middle school years.

"When you're with a group of other families and enjoy each other and travel, it's kind of a community, Freije said.

She feels that same sense of community that's evident in Langdon E-M teams and the players' parents and that is prevalent in Class B basketball, in general.

"It's the excitement of representing your town," Freije said.

Freije has been busy the past few months going to both girls Region 4 basketball games and Montana State University Big Sky games. She attended nearly every one of Fallyn's home games, something she had vowed to do her daughter's senior year at the university.

When she wasn't able to be at Fallyn's games,

thanks to technology, Freije didn't have to miss them, but a few times she did have to correct fans who thought that she was being distracted by her phone during Morgan's games.

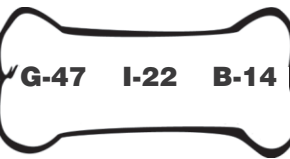
"If you see me on my phone, I'm watching Fallyn's games, while I'm watching Morgan," Freije told them.

She's grateful for the opportunities she's had to watch her daughters over the years and now, to see two of them play in postseason tournaments held within days of one another, but 1,200 miles apart in distance.

"It's exciting. How fortunate, how blessed can I be? It's amazing. I think 'Can this be real?'" Freije said.

BROWSER'S BLACKOUT BINGO NUMBERS FOR 3/7/20

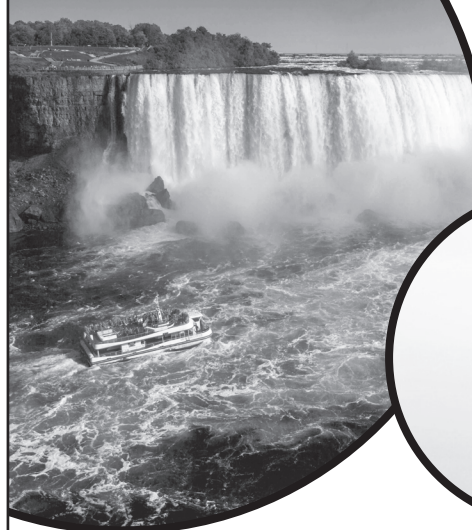
G-47 I-22 B-14



TRAVEL WITH US IN 2020!



BLUEBIRD GUIDED TOURS



***CANADIAN ROCKIES TRAIN**

August 22-31

ALASKA DISCOVERY TOUR

July 28 - August 10

IRELAND & SCOTLAND

September 11-25

CALIFORNIA OREGON TRAIN

September 16-25

WASHINGTON D.C. & NYC

September 28 - October 5

NYC & NEW ENGLAND

FALL FOLIAGE

October 8-16

*Canada trip is over two thirds full

Free Travel Show

Monday, April 6, 2020
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Country Inn and Suites
(3101 S 42nd St.)

Call or email to RSVP or request a free brochure today!

1.888.506.1276
info@bluebirdguidedtours.com
www.BluebirdGuidedTours.com

PROMO CODE: FORKS

Kids' Camp & Activities Directory
Coming Sunday, March 15, 2020

Look for the 2020 Kids' Camp & Activities Directory in the Sunday March 15 edition of the Grand Forks Herald.

Grand Forks Herald
GrandForksHerald.com

