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INSIDE

President tells states to reopen churches

Walz talks with faith leaders in Minnesota about loosening restrictions

By Dana Ferguson
Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — President Donald Trump on Friday, May 22, called on state governors to allow churches, mosques and synagogues to reopen for in-person services beginning this weekend.

Speaking to White House reporters Friday afternoon, Trump said all places of worship should be considered essential service providers during the pandemic and threatened to “override” governors who decline to lift church restrictions. Trump later walked back the comment and said it would be up to state leaders to set restrictions.

“Some governors have deemed liquor stores and abortion clinics as essential but have left out churches and other houses of worship,” Trump said. “It’s not right, so I’m correcting this injustice.”

Trump said the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will be issuing guidance to faith communities on how to safely hold worship services during the pandemic. Church leaders aiming to reopen in Minnesota previously said they were structuring their plans on existing CDC guidance.

The comments came as Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Friday was meeting with faith leaders about how to loosen restrictions. Walz came under fire earlier in the week when he announced he would allow restaurants and bars to serve as many as 50 in an outdoor setting, but kept the cap on indoor worship services at 10.

Leaders of the Minnesota Catholic Conference and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on Wednesday announced they would reopen next week with or without the state’s approval.

CHURCHES: Page A6



Photos by Erica Dischino / West Central Tribune

John Dahl stands by his kitchen sink at his home in New London. Dahl, who recently spent nearly a week at Carris Health — Rice Memorial Hospital, is recovering from COVID-19. Washing the dishes used to take him about 15 minutes. “Now, it usually takes me about an hour. It’s a long process. I have to take breaks often, but I try to do it everyday to get me up and moving,” Dahl said.

New London man continues to recover from COVID-19

By Carolyn Lange
clange@wctrib.com

New London

Last summer John Dahl led a group of 10 Boy Scouts on a high-adventure, four-day hike in the California mountains.

Today he can barely walk 50 feet before he’s winded and has to sit down.

It’s a tough turn of events for the 49-year-old New London man who spent six days in May at the Carris Health — Rice Memorial Hospital in Willmar with COVID-19.

“At 49 I feel fairly young. But it feels at times like I’m

80 years old,” Dahl said. “It’s hard to explain, but doing anything is hard.”

While hospitalized, Dahl said he was given oxygen — but was not on a ventilator — to help with his breathing. He was given morphine to ease the pain of piercing headaches that accompanied a fever, chest pains and deep cough.

“It felt like I was in a cloud,” he said.

Some days he slept 16 hours.

“Getting this is not a joke,” Dahl said. “It’s not just a common flu.”

Dahl said the medical staff at the hospital were “kind,”

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John Dahl of New London is held by his wife, Cindy Dahl. John warns that COVID-19 is a “nasty disease” and people need to respect the guidelines to stop the spread of the virus.



Carolyn Lange / West Central Tribune

Emily Ruter, 14, left, and her brother Luke Ruter, 16, pose with their 4-H sheep Friday at their rural New London farm. The siblings, who are members of the Arctander Aces 4-H Club, won’t be taking their animals to the Kandiyohi County Fair this year after it was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

No fair for 4-H’ers but virtual shows considered

By Carolyn Lange
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WILLMAR — The 4-H lambs born early this winter that siblings Luke and Emily Ruter would have taken to the Kandiyohi County Fair in early August — and possibly the Minnesota State Fair in late August — are feeling their oats on a pleasant Friday afternoon.

The brother and sister wade into the pen of sheep and they each wrangle a white lamb into a blue-ribbon pose for a photo.

But Luke, 16, and Emily, 14, won’t be taking their sheep to any fair this year — unless it’s

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Minnesota State Fair canceled, PAGE A3

some type of virtual 4-H show, which is in the beginning planning stages for Kandiyohi County.

On Thursday the Kandiyohi County Fair Board announced it had canceled the 120th annual fair because of COVID-19, and on Friday the Minnesota State Fair’s board of managers made a similar announcement.

While disappointed the County Fair has been canceled, the Ruters, who belong to the

Arctander Aces 4-H club, said they understand the reasons why.

“It (the fair) is always a fun time of year for me and my family, but it’s the safest decision for everyone,” said Luke, a junior at New London-Spicer High School.

“Yeah, it’ll keep us healthy,” said Emily, an eighth-grader at NLS.

The two said they hope there will be some kind of virtual 4-H show in place of the fair. “Anything they’re trying would be better than nothing,” said Luke.

4-H: Page A2

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Photos by Erica Dischino / West Central Tribune

John Dahl, left, looks at his wife, Cindy Dahl, while posing for a portrait outside of their home in New London where he is recovering from COVID-19. He hopes to return to work in June.

DAHL

From Page A1

“upbeat” and were “always trying to make me feel good.” But — for their own protection — visitors were not allowed.

He said the “absolute loneliness” of being in a hospital room without being able to see his wife, Cindy, or other family members, added a challenging layer to the chilling reality of the coronavirus.

“It’s a horrible feeling,” he said of being alone in the hospital. “It’s just devastating.”

He returned home on Mother’s Day.

“My mom and my wife said it was the best Mother’s Day they could possibly have,” said Dahl, who is slowly recovering and hopes to return to work in June and possibly lead another Boy Scout trip in late September to Isle Royale National Park.

Feeling icky

Dahl is a busy man. He serves on the New London City Council and works with youth at Peace Lutheran Church and with Boy Scout Troop 228.

He also works at Jennie-O Turkey Store in Willmar, which was one of the key, early locations for COVID-19 cases in Kandiyohi County.

“Yep. I’m one of the people at Jennie-O that got sick,” he said.

His job involves packaging promotional products at the turkey processing plant.



John Dahl lies on the couch at his home in New London where he slept when he was contagious with COVID-19. He spent his nights in solitude and isolated himself from his family to protect them from contracting the virus.

Because of his work and involvement with so many people-based activities, Dahl said he kept himself informed about the coronavirus and knew what needed to be done to prevent the spread of the disease.

Shortly after a co-worker became ill, Dahl began wearing a mask even at home, slept on the couch, used a separate bathroom and didn’t get closer than six feet to his wife, son and 8-year-old granddaughter who all live in the same house.

Dahl, who has asthma, tested positive at about the time that Jennie-O temporarily suspended operations.

About a week later, Dahl said he started to “feel icky” and was having trouble breathing. He went to the hospital, where he was admitted with oxygen levels that were well below normal.

It took six days for his oxygen levels to

stabilize enough to return home fever-free and without concern of being contagious.

“This is a nasty disease,” said Dahl. “Whether you’re healthy or not, we should really respect this.”

Nearly two weeks after leaving the hospital, Dahl is still moving slowly. It takes him about an hour to do 15 minutes’ worth of dish washing and he uses a cane in case he gets weak while walking. A big sneeze can literally take his breath away.

He has started carving walking sticks from tree branches to fill the time in between frequent naps.

It comforts him to know that because he took precautions, no one else in his family got COVID-19.

Think of others first

Dahl said the response from his supervisors and co-workers at Jennie-O — whom he praised for the steps taken to

stop the spread of the coronavirus — and the support of friends and family from his church and hometown community have helped him during his illness.

He said he missed one City Council meeting while in the hospital and that Mayor Bill Gossman — who is struggling with his own serious health issue not related to COVID-19 — called him to let him know the city was concerned about him and supported him.

That display of putting others first is the message Dahl said he hopes everyone considers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Dahl said what made the Greatest Generation the truly greatest generation is that “they thought of others before themselves.”

Whether it’s social distancing, wearing masks or following guidelines while shopping at local stores, Dahl said it’s important for adults to be good role models with their words and actions so there can be another great generation.

He said it’s troubling to see social media posts from people who say it’s up to the individual to decide whether to risk their life by not following guidelines. Dahl said the person who takes that risk may unknowingly have the virus and spread it to 10 to 15 people.

He said everyone wants “normal life” back but that “we need to do what’s best for our community and not what’s necessarily best for ourselves.”

Willmar 5-Day Forecast

Morning	Afternoon	Evening	
(7 a.m.) 60° Cloudy ESE at 4-8 mph	(Noon) 69° Cloudy SE at 6-12 mph	(7 p.m.) 73° Cloudy ESE at 7-14 mph	
Tomorrow	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
76° 60° A couple of showers and a t-storm SE at 7-14 mph	69° 57° Rain and a t-storm in the afternoon WNW at 7-14 mph	74° 55° Delightful with clouds and sun NW at 6-12 mph	80° 58° Mostly sunny SW at 4-8 mph

Almanac

Willmar through 5 p.m. yesterday

Temperature
High/low 70°/57°
Normal high/low 71°/49°
Record high 94° in 1925
Record low 26° in 1924

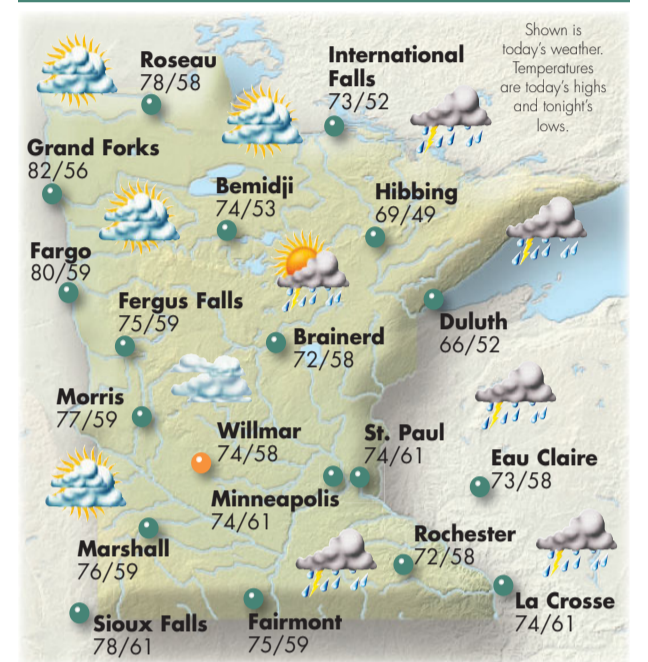
Precipitation
24 hrs to 5 p.m. yest. 0.00"
Year to date 4.19"
Normal year to date 7.60"

Sun and Moon

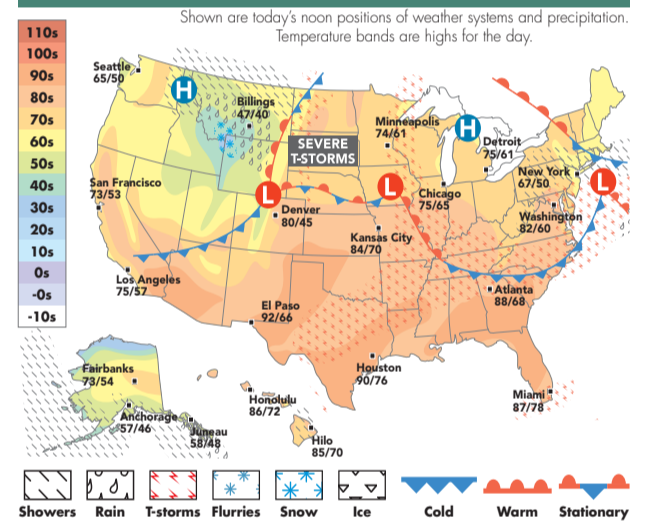
	Sunrise	Sunset		
Today	5:43 a.m.	8:52 p.m.		
Sun.	5:42 a.m.	8:53 p.m.		
	Moonrise	Moonset		
Today	6:27 a.m.	10:02 p.m.		
Sun.	7:06 a.m.	11:04 p.m.		
	First	Full	Last	New
	May 29	Jun 5	Jun 13	Jun 21

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National Forecast



National Summary: Showers and thunderstorms will move across southern New England and the mid-Atlantic today as a storm moves off the mid-Atlantic coast. Spotty showers and thunderstorms will also pester a large swath of the nation from the Midwest and Ohio Valley through the Mississippi Valley into the Southeast and parts of Texas. A storm moving through the Northwest will bring rain and some mountain snow to the northern Rockies. The same system will spark severe thunderstorms late in the day in the far western Dakotas. The Southwest will be dry.

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2020

TODAY'S INFO

What's happening?

Do you know of something that might make a good story or photograph for the newspaper? Just give us a call at 320-235-1150, or stop in our office at 2208 Trott Ave. S.W., Willmar.

Corrections

If you have a question about accuracy of information in a news story, please call the news department at 320-235-1150.

If any corrections are necessary, they will be published here.

essary, they will be published here.

Lottery results

Winning numbers drawn Friday night are:
Daily 3: 8-0-1
Gopher 5: 4-10-15-18-24
Northstar Cash: 2-11-13-21-31
Mega Millions: 8-10-20-44-46
Mega ball: 18
For more information, go to mnlottory.com.

4-H

From Page A1

That’s exactly what’s in the works for Kandiyohi County 4-H’ers, said Mikayla Frey, University of Minnesota extension educator in Kandiyohi County.

Frey said the local 4-H council is determined to showcase 4-H achievements but that “it might look a little different this year.”

Frey sent emails to 4-H families Friday, telling youth to keep working on their 4-H projects and asking them to respond to a survey about what type

of event kids would like in place of the fair — and what type of event parents would feel comfortable with.

Some of the possible options include a total online experience with remote judging, a combination of remote judging and dropping off projects for hands-on judging, in-person judging with restrictions for social distancing, or a mixture of options.

The input from families will help determine what the event will look like in an attempt to replace the experiences of being at the County Fair, said Frey.

“We’re trying to figure out the best way to have those memories and those moments.”

A statewide meeting will be held Tuesday with youth 4-H leaders regarding possible options for the State Fair.

It’s expected that more area counties will be making decisions soon on their county fairs. Currently in surrounding counties, the fairs in Yellow Medicine County and Pope County are also canceled.

Frey said the early decision by the Kandiyohi County Board to cancel the fair was helpful to 4-H leaders who would now

be in the process of organizing judges, purchasing awards and buying supplies for the food booth, which is the biggest fundraiser for the county 4-H program.

Meanwhile, the 4-H program is continuing a healthy variety of online programs for youth. An at-home, crime scene investigation camp in June will feature a local law enforcement investigator who will teach kids about gathering evidence.

Frey said it’s hoped that other programs this summer may include a combination of on-line classes and in-person sessions.

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Hours: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, closed Saturday and Sunday.
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Classified ads (320-235-6766)
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.
classifieds@wctrib.com

Vol. 93 No. 123
(USPS 675080)

Postmaster: Send any address changes to: West Central Tribune, PO Box 839, Willmar, MN 56201-0839

Publishing: The West Central Tribune is published as a digital E-paper edition on Mondays and as print and E-paper editions Tuesday through Saturday. The Tribune does not publish Sundays or the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. The newspaper is published by West Central Tribune at 2208 Trott Ave. SW, Willmar, MN, 56201.

Membership Rates

Carrier
\$227.24 for 52 weeks, \$118.30 for 26 weeks, \$59.15 for 13 weeks
The delivery deadline is 6:30 am Tuesday - Friday and 7:00 am Saturday
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