



Participants gather Thursday evening outside of Kennedy Elementary School in Willmar for a protest and prayer vigil held in response to an anti-Islam speaker sponsored by the THEE Book Club, a local group of self-described Christian patriots.

Controversial speaker draws twice the crowd

Anti-Islam pastor speaks in Willmar to about 100 as more than 200 protest

By Tom Cherveney
tcherveney@wctrib.com

Willmar

Usama Dakdok's first visit to Willmar was a quiet and private affair last month, but his second visit was anything but that.

Two very different crowds gathered Thursday evening at the Kennedy Elementary School, where the Egyptian-born pastor of the Straight Way of Grace Ministry came to deliver his message that Islam is dangerous. It's a message he's been delivering to communities in Minnesota and other states for more than a decade.

Outside the school, well over 200 people joined under the message "we are better together" to



Dakdok



Istahil Hassan, left, and Mary Daugherty hold a sign together Thursday evening outside of Kennedy Elementary School in Willmar. The message of the organizers of the vigil was that Willmar is an inclusive and welcoming community.

SPEAKER: Page A2

Deer hunting prospects look good in area

By Tom Cherveney
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WILLMAR — Area wildlife managers expect a good deer harvest in much of west central Minnesota when the 2019 firearm season gets underway Saturday.

Deer numbers are good, the corn harvest is progressing, and the deer are active, very much in the rut. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Area Wildlife Managers Cory Netland, New London, and Curt Vacek, Appleton, both said they are seeing a lot of deer activity and signs that the rut is in full swing.

Some of the state's best deer hunting success is enjoyed in Deer Permit Area 277, which includes Kandiyohi and Meeker counties. Deer numbers remain strong in the area, Netland said. He is hopeful hunters will match if not surpass last year's success.

There were 2,986 deer harvested through all seasons in the permit area in 2017, and 2,985 in 2018. Last year there were 6,631 hunters in the area, and a similar number is expected this year. Firearm hunters recorded a 45 percent harvest success rate in the permit area both of the last two years, which is one of the best rates in the state.

This is the fifth straight year the area is managed as hunter's choice, allowing hunters to harvest one deer of either sex. While there are a lot of deer in the permit area, there are also a lot of hunters. Maintaining the permit area as a hunter's choice rather than a more liberal, managed area — where each hunter is allowed to take up to two deer — has helped keep the deer numbers consistent.

Netland said he also expects that hunters will see good success in the northern part of permit area 283 in the Atwater, Grove City, Cosmos and Lake Lillian areas. Hunter success declines south of state Highway 7 in the more intensively farmed lands there. That is also the case in permit area 282, which includes the state Highway 23 corridor southwest of Willmar. The habitat needed by deer is limited.

Deer hunters should generally see good success in the Lac qui Parle area this year. Vacek said the deer population in area 278, which includes the Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area, is good, but not quite as high as desired. The area is managed as a lottery area, with 400 permits for antlerless deer. The lottery designation has been used to help the population rebound. It has not responded as fast as expected, according to Vacek.

He said high water levels could affect access for hunters in some areas.

He noted too that the corn harvest is progressing, with an estimated 50 to 60 percent of the crop removed. With the corn harvest behind schedule, Vacek said there will likely be many would-be hunters in combines and tractor cabs instead of deer stands and blinds Saturday.

CWD monitoring

Both wildlife managers will be working at

DEER: Page A2

Walz asks for emergency assistance for northwest Minnesota farmers

By Dana Ferguson
Forum News Service

MINNEAPOLIS — Farmers in northwest Minnesota need emergency assistance to deal with difficult — if not impossible — harvest conditions, Gov. Tim Walz wrote in a letter to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The first-term governor said after visiting farmers in East Grand Forks who described the situation as "unprecedented" and "catastrophic" he submitted the request to free up disaster loan funds for farmers in need. In North Dakota and northwest Minnesota, farmers faced spring flooding that delayed planting as well as record rain and snow in October that prevented or delayed harvest or destroyed crops.

After surveying the damage, Walz asked for a disaster designation to be issued for Becker, Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahanomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau and Wilkin counties in an effort to "triage" damage. Wet weather in the area made fields unworkable and impassible. And some crops molded in the fields, while others, like sugar beets and potatoes became lodged in frozen soil.

"It's not a fix but it might provide some of that safety net to kind of soften the blow a little bit," Walz told reporters on Thursday, Nov. 7.

The financial impacts for farmers already facing a difficult year in terms of boundaries to trade and wavering commodity prices are not yet known. But early indicators suggest that unharvested or damaged crops could drag down farmers' finances in that part of the state and beyond. And the hit is likely to ripple through rural communities.

To be eligible for the emergency declaration, 30% of a crop must be lost. USDA officials were beginning to assess the damage Thursday and said they were close to determining whether North Dakota's emergency assistance would be declared.

"Our disaster programs are just to soften the blow. They do not make everybody whole their losses and they don't always fit every situation," Bill

WALZ: Page A2



Dana Ferguson / Forum News Service

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Thursday, Nov. 7, spoke with reporters in Minneapolis about his request to get federal disaster assistance for farmers in Northwest Minnesota following a trying harvest.

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YOUR FAMILIES
for your sacrifices and courage

Check out our HONOR section
in tomorrow's paper

WEST CENTRAL
Tribune

DEER

From Page A1

stations in areas where hunters must bring their deer to be tested for chronic wasting disease. They are among 472 DNR employees who will be

SPEAKER

From Page A1

celebrate Willmar for its cultural diversity. The diverse crowd, including many from Willmar’s Somali community, came in opposition to Dakdok, but focused on their message: Willmar is an inclusive and welcoming community.

The Rev. Dane Skilbred, Vinje Lutheran Church of Willmar, and Aden Hassan, imam for the Islamic Society of Willmar, joined in celebrating the city’s “welcoming resolution” in a formal address to the crowd. An interfaith group including leaders from ISALAH, a coalition of faith communities, and the Islamic Society of Willmar helped organize the gathering as a prayer vigil.

Some who joined the event felt moved to grab the megaphone and offer their own words to celebrate the community.

“We are here for the right reason,” said Bonnie Hauser, semi-retired after serving as an elementary instructor in the Willmar Schools. Hauser told the audience that she was proud to be a Willmar teacher, where children of different ethnic and faith backgrounds learn together.

“This is what I know my community could be,” said Jessica Rohloff, a lifelong Willmar resident and a community organizer.

Najib Aqib, a member of Willmar’s Somali community, didn’t grab the megaphone, but he was among those who joined to support the prayer vigil. He said he

working details as part of the CWD effort.

Netland will be stationed in Litchfield, which is part of the central surveillance area. It was established after a deer from a Meeker County deer farm tested positive for CWD in 2017.

This is the third year of

moved to Willmar in 2005 and has found it to be a very welcoming community, and that is why he came to the event.

“This is the best place to live,” he told the West Central Tribune.

The words and large crowd outside of Kennedy Elementary were much more than Jonathan Marchand had ever expected to hear or see. Marchand had a big role in bringing the crowd together when just over a week ago he learned that Usama Dakdok was coming to speak in Willmar.

Marchand started a Facebook group, “Keep Hate Out of Kennedy Elementary,” that counted just shy of 500 members as of Thursday night.

He said he had previously heard of Dakdok’s message against Islam, and “just kind of had it.” Marchand said his father had been a teacher who spent more than 40 years educating children about the major religions of the world without deriding any one of them.

Marchand said he does not appreciate the anti-Islam message, and he doesn’t want the world to believe the community of Willmar feels that way.

“It’s time to show up and say this is not what we’re about,” he said as the crowd gathered.

Dakdok spoke to a private gathering in Willmar last month at the invitation of THEE Book Club, according to Heidi Jo Ahmann, one of the organizers of the book club. Just a year in existence, THEE Book Club considers itself a small group of Christian patriots who believe Americans

are facing threats to their freedom of faith and threats to the U.S. Constitution.

Ahmann said Dakdok did not have enough time last month to deliver his full message, and the audience wanted him back. The group decided to make his second visit a public event.

“We believe this message needs to get out and be heard,” she told the West Central Tribune.

“We stand on truth. We prayed about it and decided we’d make this one public knowing we’d get backlash.”

More than 100 people filled seats in the elementary school auditorium for Dakdok’s presentation, which he said would take about one and a half hours to complete. A musician, Gary Froiland, performed patriotic and religious music prior to the presentation.

Dakdok told the audience that the Council on American-Islamic Relations accuses him of Islamophobia and being

operations to monitor for CWD.

The central Minnesota surveillance area includes deer permit areas 277 and 283 east of state Highway 4, deer permit area 219 south of state Highway 55, and deer permit area 285 north of state Highway 7.

Erica Dischino / West Central Tribune

It was a full house Thursday evening at Kennedy Elementary School in Willmar where Usama Dakdok of The Straight Way of Grace Ministry delivered his message that Islam is dangerous. He was invited by the THEE Book Club, a local group of self-described Christian patriots.

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And the state has made available farm advocates that can provide financial advice to farmers at no cost.

Walz last week also waived some of the limits for truckers hauling propane out to farms so that more farmers could get access to the fuels and dry crops in the fields.

Mental health and stress management resources

Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline — (833) 600-2670 ext. 1

Mental Health and Family Services Line — 1-800-FARM-AID


Ted Matthews, rural mental health counselor — (320) 266-2390

Mental Health Minnesota — text “MN” to 741741

Follow Dana Ferguson on Twitter @bydanaferguson, call 651-290-0707 or email dferguson@forumcomm.com

Willmar 5-Day Forecast

Morning




(7 a.m.)
18°

Clouds and sun; not as cold

SSE at 7-14 mph

Afternoon




(Noon)
33°

Clouds and sun; not as cold

SSE at 10-20 mph

Evening




(7 p.m.)
32°

Some clouds

SSW at 6-12 mph

Tomorrow




40° 21°

Clouds and sun, a shower in spots

WSW at 4-8 mph

Sunday




28° 10°

Mostly cloudy, breezy and colder

NNW at 10-20 mph

Monday




18° 6°

Colder with clouds and sun

NNW at 10-20 mph

Tuesday



22° 17°

Cold with more sun than clouds

SSW at 6-12 mph

Almanac

Willmar through 5 p.m. yesterday

Temperature

High/low 28°/9°

Normal high/low 46°/28°

Record high 70° in 2001

Record low -6° in 1991

Precipitation

24 hrs to 5 p.m. yest. 0.00"

Year to date 34.11"

Normal year to date 27.51"

Sun and Moon

Sunrise

Sunset

Today 7:08 a.m. 4:59 p.m.

Sat. 7:09 a.m. 4:58 p.m.

Moonrise

Moonset

Today 3:46 p.m. 2:52 a.m.

Sat. 4:08 p.m. 3:53 a.m.

Full

Last

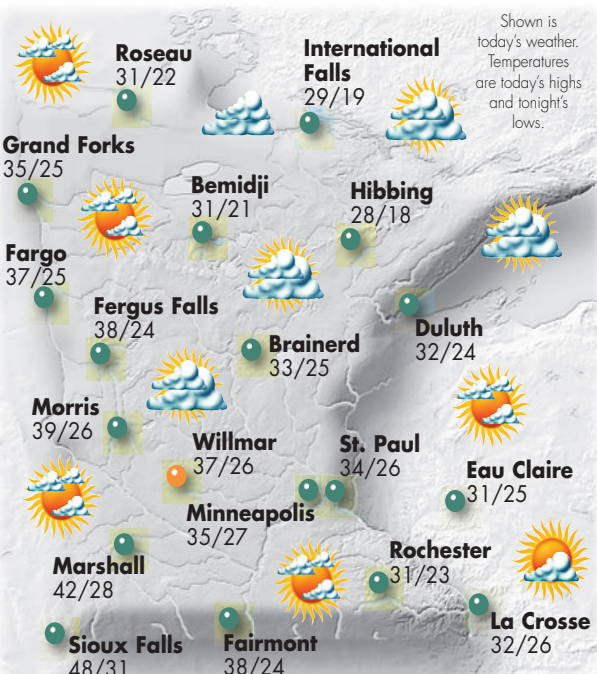
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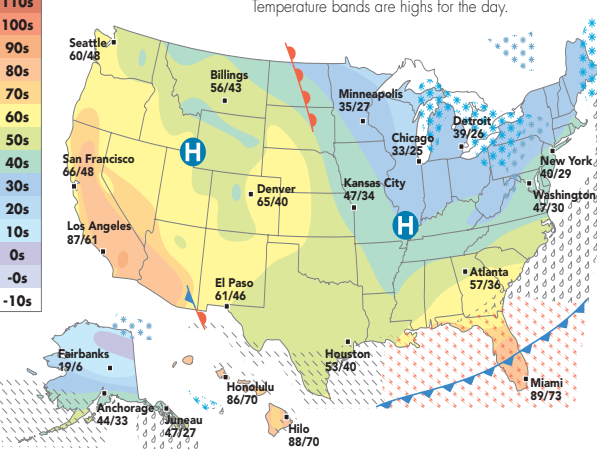


Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

Roseau 31/22	International Falls 29/19
Grand Forks 35/25	Bemidji 31/21
Fargo 37/25	Hibbing 28/18
Fergus Falls 38/24	Duluth 32/24
Morris 39/26	Brainerd 33/25
Willmar 37/26	St. Paul 34/26
Minneapolis 35/27	Eau Claire 31/25
Marshall 42/28	Rochester 31/23
Sioux Falls 48/31	La Crosse 32/26
Fairmont 38/24	

National Forecast

Shown are today's noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



Legend: Showers, Rain, T-storms, Flurries, Snow, Ice, Cold, Warm, Stationary

National Summary:

A bit of snow will linger across northern New England today while dry but chilly conditions filter into the rest of the Northeast. The cool winds, brought in by a high pressure in the Midwest, will also allow lake-effect snow to continue downwind of the Great Lakes. Dry and cold conditions will persist across the rest of the Midwest. Chilly air will be in place across the Southeast, with a frost or freeze in many locations during the morning. A stalled front will produce rain showers through much of the day in the Florida Peninsula.

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2019

TODAY'S INFO

What’s happening?

Do you know of something that might make a good story or photograph for the newspaper? Call at 320-235-1150.

Correction

A Forum News Service story published Thursday in the Tribune about recreational marijuana should have said that the cannabis symposium in downtown Minneapolis was held on Wednesday.

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Corrections

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

Lottery results

Winning numbers drawn Thursday night are:
Daily 3: 8-7-1
Northstar Cash: 2-10-14-19-30
Lucky for Life: 1-10-15-18-40
Lucky ball: 15
For more information, go to mnlottery.com.

Classified ads (320-235-6766)

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

classads@wctrib.com

Fax: 320-235-6769

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