

# Football playoffs

Grand Forks out;  
East Grand Forks in, Page B1



# Grand Forks Herald

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2019

## LIVING HIGH AND DRY

By Adam Kurtz  
Grand Forks Herald

Seasonal workers evacuated from the Red River State Recreation Area are temporarily camping out in the parking lot of Kmart, as American Crystal Sugar and Express Employment Professionals decide what steps to take next.

More than 30 RVs and trailers sit in the parking lot of Kmart, with electrical generators running and workers unsure when they will be back to work. They were relocated to the parking lot by Express Employment Professionals, after the Red River flooded the Sherlock Campground in East Grand Forks, where they were previously staying. That campground is now closed for the season.

"Basically what we're doing is trying to find a more permanent solution power-wise, because everyone's running on personal generators or small generators right now," Scott Lindgren, managing partner at Express Employment Professionals, said on Tuesday, Oct. 15. "We did that to get them through the night last night, and now (we) are looking for a better solution long-term, so they can stick around and help us finish the beet harvest."

Lindgren said that he was given permission from Hope Covenant Church to use the parking lot.

"Hope Church turned it around pretty quick and said you can use the parking lot if you need to, so we had a place to get them away from the river for safety's sake," Lindgren said.

Express Employment and American Crystal Sugar are working together to provide water to the people, as well as gasoline for the generators. A "honey wagon" tanker truck



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

Steve Seeba, a sugar beet harvest worker from California, is among more than 30 RV'ers working the harvest who relocated to the former Kmart parking lot after the campground at the Red River Recreational area in East Grand Forks flooded Monday, Oct. 14.

will come around to off load the waste water from the RVs.

Despite the difficult situation, some of the seasonal workers remain hopeful of getting back to work soon.

Bill Shearer, from Buchanan, Mich., is here to work the harvest with his wife, Kathleen. He said he expects to go to work this week in East Grand Forks. They have been working the harvest here for the past 10 years. He expressed praise for Crystal Sugar and Express Professionals.

"They're working their hind ends off taking care of us," he said. "They brought some generators from Crookston. Most everybody has got a generator. We're holding our own. They got a guy that brings us fresh water."

One of the possibilities for the displaced workers is to relocate to the Grand Forks Campground and RV park. "We've got a couple of



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

Scott Lindgren, managing partner with Express Employment Professionals, left, visits with John Ward, center, and Loel Banta in the former Kmart parking lot where sugarbeet harvest workers relocated following Monday's closure of the Red River Recreational Area's campground in East Grand Forks due to flooding.

options right now, one would be we have the campground south of our office on I-29,

and they are making spaces

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## Dachtler leans 'no' on interchange study

By Joe Bowen  
Grand Forks Herald

Grand Forks City Council member Katie Dachtler could be the deciding vote on a plan that would lay some of the groundwork for an interchange at Interstate 29 and 47th Avenue.



Dachtler

Council members, acting as the city's Committee of the Whole, arrived at a 3-3 tie on Monday over funding for an environmental study of the interchange. Dachtler, the seventh voting member, was at the city's first-ever Indigenous Peoples Day celebration during the vote and did not attend the committee meeting. That means she could break the tie when the City Council convenes next week to formally consider funding the study.

On Tuesday, Dachtler paused for several moments before she told the Herald that she was

leaning, ever so slightly, toward a "no" vote. Dachtler said she plans to watch the city's recording of Monday's meeting and is waiting to hear back from city staff she emailed before the vote with questions about the interchange.

"I don't have a firm answer for you at this point until after I've watched the video and been able to hear my colleagues' remarks and thoughts as well," she said. "I do want to go into those meetings and listen to the comments of my peers because sometimes they have a perspective or they have information that I didn't even think to ask because it's just not in my wheelhouse or it's not my scope and it changes my mind."

But her concern, Dachtler said, is that working toward the interchange would make it one more

item — perhaps one too many — on a list of projects the city would ask the North Dakota Legislature to help pay for. The city's south side has been growing for years, but the area near the hoped-for interchange is still sparsely populated.

"We're growing fast. We're going to be out there," Dachtler said. "But we also need to address the issues that we're having right now in the community."

A bigger priority, at least in the part of the city Dachtler and council member Danny Weigel represent, is a traffic underpass at 42nd Street and DeMers Avenue, she said. Weigel wrote on Facebook that he understands the "future importance" of the interchange but believes that an underpass or overpass at that intersection should be the city's priority.

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## Panel splits vote on plan

By Sam Easter  
Grand Forks Herald

Grand Forks leaders were deadlocked Monday evening over the future of a study that would lay significant groundwork for an Interstate 29 interchange at 47th Avenue South — long a marquee project that city leaders have hoped to see built, but one seen by some as less urgent than a new traffic bridge over the Red River or a new underpass at 42nd Street and DeMers Avenue.

City Council leaders at a Committee of the Whole meeting cast a 3-3 vote, with member Katie Dachtler absent, on a plan to fund an environmental study of a new interchange with 50 percent of the study cost — or up to \$1.5 million — with the remainder covered at least in part by state dollars, if not federal funding as well.

A tie vote is exceedingly rare at Grand Forks City Hall. In the immediate aftermath of the vote, City Council President Dana Sande indicated the item would be referred to the full council, which consists of the same membership as the committee, with "no recommendation."

The study, which will prepare an "environmental document" on the 47th Avenue South interchange, would not commit the city to building the interchange. But it was viewed by council members at Monday's meeting as a significant moment in the life of the project in that pursuing it would commit the city to a likely seven-figure sum specifically for its advancement.

City Engineer Al Grasser framed the study as an opportunity to embark on a long process toward building the interchange, which might not actually be built for years. By then, he said, expected

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## Three cases of vaping illness confirmed

By Kimberly Wynn  
Grand Forks Herald

Three cases of vaping-related illness in northeast North Dakota this past week — indicating a potential cluster — has been confirmed by the North Dakota Department of Health, according to a statement released on Tuesday, Oct. 15.

Reported symptoms include cough, fatigue, dizziness, headache, vomiting and diarrhea, chest pain and worsening difficulty breathing, sometimes requiring intensive care. Some patients received antibiotics but did not have a positive response, according to the state Department of Health.

"The North Dakota Department of Health is still investigating the cases in the potential cluster and will continue to monitor the situation in the northeast part of the state, as well as across North Dakota," said Kodi Pinks, assistant director at the Office of the State Epidemiologist.

To date, the Department of Health has received seven confirmed, five probable and three suspected reports of severe respiratory illness in patients with a history of vaping use. Similar to nationwide trends, most, but not all of

VAPING: Page A2

## DOT accepting bids for TRF airport

Two carriers have responded; deadline is Nov. 12

By Adam Kurtz  
Grand Forks Herald

THIEF RIVER FALLS — The U.S. Department of Transportation is accepting bids for Essential Air Service at Thief River Falls Airport and two carriers already are showing interest.

The DOT issued an order requesting proposals for air carriers interested in providing Essential Air Service from Thief River Falls Airport either to Minneapolis-St. Paul International airport, or another regional hub airport. That order was issued Thursday, Oct. 10.

In the days since, Thief River Falls Airport Manager Joe Hedrick told the Herald he has

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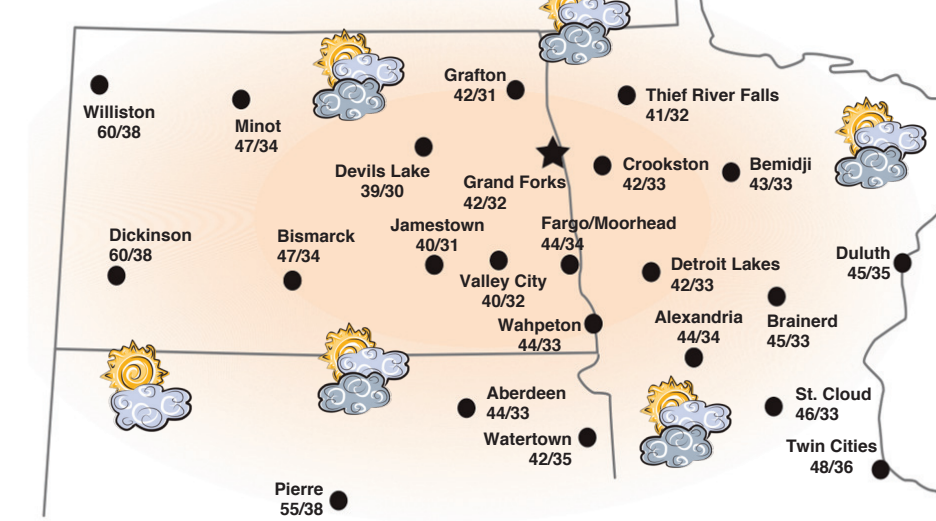
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## today

Today we will see cloudy skies with a high temperature of 42°, humidity of 79%. Southwest wind 2 to 6 mph. The high temperature on this day last year was 37°. The record high temperature for today is 82° set in 1956.

Day	High	Low	Conditions
Wednesday	42	32	Cloudy
Thursday	52	45	Partly Cloudy
Friday	53	41	Mostly Cloudy
Saturday	51	38	Mostly Sunny
Sunday	49	40	Isolated Rain

## Today's regional forecast map

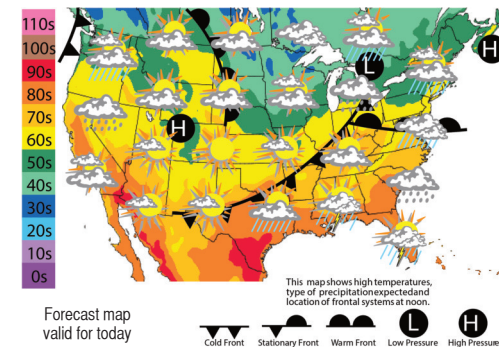


## 24-hour wind forecast (speed in mph)



## national

City	Today Hi/Lo/Wea
Albuquerque	76/45/s
Anchorage	39/30/cl
Atlanta	70/47/sh
Austin	69/54/sh
Billings	73/45/pc
Boise	74/51/s
Boston	60/54/pc
Brownsville	85/68/t
Charlotte	71/46/sh
Cheyenne	74/37/s
Chicago	50/40/cl
Cincinnati	53/40/sh
Cleveland	55/47/sh
Dallas	70/50/s
Denver	78/43/pc
Des Moines	51/38/mc
Fairbanks	31/16/mc
Honolulu	85/72/sh
Indianapolis	51/40/mc
Kansas City	55/41/s
Las Vegas	87/63/pc
Los Angeles	84/60/pc
Memphis	65/44/s
Miami	89/78/pc
Milwaukee	49/36/mc
Nashville	63/42/pc
New Orleans	81/61/sh
New York	66/50/ra
Orlando	85/73/t
Philadelphia	69/49/ra
Phoenix	95/72/s
Portland, OR	59/50/ra
Raleigh	69/46/sh
Reno	72/46/pc
St. Louis	56/40/pc
Salt Lake City	74/53/pc
San Francisco	66/55/mc
Seattle	57/53/ra
Tampa	86/75/t
Tucson	92/64/s
Washington	65/50/ra



City	Today Hi/Lo/Wea
Amsterdam	56/51/ra
Athens	77/66/s
Baghdad	99/72/pc
Beijing	62/50/cl
Berlin	59/52/ra
Bermuda	76/75/pc
Cairo	90/64/s
Dublin	56/45/ra
Frankfurt	58/51/ra
Geneva	60/39/s
Helsinki	47/40/ra
Hong Kong	81/75/s
Istanbul	71/63/pc
Jerusalem	87/66/ra
Kabul	67/47/s
Karachi	60/50/ra
Madrid	64/49/mc
Mexico City	71/59/ra
Moscow	46/33/mc
Oslo	44/42/ra
Paris	59/51/ra
Reykjavik	49/46/ra
Rome	72/60/ra
Seoul	68/47/pc
Stockholm	50/48/ra
Sydney	76/58/s
Vienna	62/53/ra

## world

City	Today Hi/Lo/Wea
Amsterdam	56/51/ra
Athens	77/66/s
Baghdad	99/72/pc
Beijing	62/50/cl
Berlin	59/52/ra
Bermuda	76/75/pc
Cairo	90/64/s
Dublin	56/45/ra
Frankfurt	58/51/ra
Geneva	60/39/s
Helsinki	47/40/ra
Hong Kong	81/75/s
Istanbul	71/63/pc
Jerusalem	87/66/ra
Kabul	67/47/s
Karachi	60/50/ra
Madrid	64/49/mc
Mexico City	71/59/ra
Moscow	46/33/mc
Oslo	44/42/ra
Paris	59/51/ra
Reykjavik	49/46/ra
Rome	72/60/ra
Seoul	68/47/pc
Stockholm	50/48/ra
Sydney	76/58/s
Vienna	62/53/ra

## Precipitation prompts hurried purchase in EGF

**By Joe Bowen**  
Grand Forks Herald

An exceedingly wet autumn led to a public works purchase on short notice in East Grand Forks. City Council members on Tuesday voted to temporarily suspend their normal rules of order to authorize city public works staff to buy a \$62,000 pump. The suspension was necessary because the purchase was not on the council agenda posted a few days earlier.

The 8-inch pump is set to be stationed near the city's "equalization basin," an approximately 30 million gallon holding pond north of town, from which it will pump millions of gallons of excess sewer water into a ditch that runs to the Red River. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency signed off on a plan to pump 3

million gallons per day, but Public Works Director Jason Stordahl said they've notified the agency that the city will probably need to pump more than that.

Stordahl said the water heading into the Red is "substantially" diluted by rain and snowfall but is nonetheless still considered sewage. East Grand Forks is buying the new pump because the city's wastewater system is approaching its capacity. Public works staff have been sending as much sewer water as they can to Grand Forks, which has a large treatment plant. Whatever they can't send over ends up in the basin, which is nearing its capacity, and the city has been pumping wastewater from the basin into the river to keep the basin from hitting its own capacity.

The new pump would replace a 6-inch pump and a 10-inch pump

that have been chugging along near the "EQ," Stordahl said the plan is to put the smallest of the three in reserve in case other parts of East Grand Forks need it. The 10-inch one is on its last legs.

The sewer system, Stordahl suspects, is being strained from seepage from the stormwater system, people who — knowingly or unknowingly — have sump pumps that drain into the wastewater rather than stormwater system, and, perhaps, some infrastructure that was installed incorrectly.

Five-plus inches of rain fell on the Grand Cities in late September, followed by three days of sleet and snow last week that quickly began to melt. Mayor Steve Gander characterized it as "unprecedented" in his lifetime.

You can reach Joe Bowen at jbowen@gfherald.com or 701-780-1102

## VAPING

From Page A1

confirmed or probable cases in North Dakota reported a history of using tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products.

"We continue to collect data and are working closely with the CDC to aid in the investigation," said Dr. Tracy Miller, state epidemiologist with the Department of Health. "It is vital that individuals who have experienced symptoms and have a his-

tory of vaping either talk to their health care provider or fill out the survey on our website." As of Oct. 8, 49 states, 1,299 potential cases of severe respiratory illness from vaping or e-cigarette use among teenagers and adults. Twenty-six deaths

have been confirmed in 21 states, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which, in its Oct. 11 issue of Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, called the illness EVALI, or "e-cigarette or vaping product use associated lung injury."

## CORRECTION

Daniel Younggren is the president of the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association. His last name was wrong in a story on Page 5A Tuesday, Oct. 15.

## DOT

From Page A1

been contacted by two carriers interested in submitting bids for the next EAS contract at that airport. The window for submitting bids to the U.S. DOT closes Nov. 12. Bids will be made public shortly after that date.

The current provider of EAS services in Thief River Falls is Boutique Air, which has served the city since July of 2016. The airline offers cheap — often for as low as \$120 round-trip — daily flights to Minneapolis. However, Boutique also has had troubles in recent months.

The Herald reported last month that Boutique has had numerous canceled flights, not due to factors beyond its control but rather with "controllable cancellations," according to Hedrick. For example, in June, a dozen round-trip flights were canceled; 11 were considered controllable cancellations. In September, there were 16 canceled flights, all considered "controllable," according to

the most recent data available from the airport.

Boutique Air's EAS contract runs from June 1, 2018, through May 31, 2020. The company receives more than \$3 million per year in subsidies for providing Essential Air Service.

On July 29, the Thief River Falls Airport Authority sent a letter of concern to Boutique Air about the high number of cancellations.

In the two weeks since the Herald published its report, Boutique CEO Shawn Simpson reached out to Hedrick to discuss the challenges the carrier has faced, Hedrick said. Simpson is planning a trip to Thief River Falls to discuss with Hedrick changes he hopes to implement with the airline. That meeting could happen later in October.

The U.S. DOT has requested proposals from air carriers to provide 18 weekly round trips with an eight- or nine-seat plane from Thief River Falls to Minneapolis or another hub airport. The department also would accept 12 weekly round-trip flights with a 30- to 50-seat airplane.

Lottery numbers  
Daily 3: 9-1-3  
Northstar Cash: 7-14-19-24-28  
2 by 2: Red numbers: 5-8  
White numbers: 14-16  
Mega Millions: 4-12-14-35-70 Mega ball: 2