

editor's notes

Chris Rogers, editor, Winona Post

How to get your old arrest off our website

Over the years, we've all done something we're not proud of. For those caught breaking the law, our legal system ensures that actions have consequences. The goal is to teach people a lesson, to get them to follow the law next time. As a broke college student, it only took me a few speeding tickets to realize: I can't afford speeding tickets.

But long after the fines are paid and sentences are served, these crimes live on in communities across the U.S. The combination of articles on low-level crimes existing forever on local newspaper websites, search engines bringing years-old articles to the front page of the internet, and ordinary Joes not having a more flattering web presence to overtake them creates an environment where minor crimes can become the number-one search result for your name years later. Our police blotter was never intended to work this way.

I'm grateful that, long before my time, the Winona Post made the classy decision that crime stories — excepting only the highest-profile cases — don't run on our front page. We don't print mugshots. There are more important things happening in our community. The Post's philosophy is the opposite of the "if it bleeds it leads" mantra at some news outlets, which seem to treat crime reporting like an opportunity for salacious entertainment — a print version of the TV show "Cops." The shame this heaps on low-level offenders can be worse than their actual sentences.

That said, our crime reporting does have a purpose to serve. We believe in the public's right to know what's happening in their neighborhood and who police arrested and why. I spent my first few years as a reporter trudging down to the police station every morning to get this information, and it forms the foundation of our newspaper's ability to report on major events — such as murders or police use of force — when they happen. Even with mundane cases, we should all care about how public safety and civil rights are protected in our community, and these daily 9-1-1 calls are where the rubber hits the road. Over the years, we've done in-depth reporting on issues like pedestrian accidents and domestic violence, but it was daily police blotters that helped fuel those bigger picture stories. Crime affects policy decisions, too. A rash of burglaries in the 2010s, for instance, spurred the Winona City Council to hire another police officer. Having an accurate public record of alleged crimes and police response is fundamental to in-

formed conversations about public safety policy. Crime reporting can also help people make safer choices in their own lives, and it can help dispel false rumors.

Whether low-level crime articles should exist on the internet forever is another matter. A few U.S. newspapers — most prominently the Boston Globe, Bangor Daily News, and Cleveland Plain Dealer — have set policies to take articles about years-old, minor crimes off their websites. After getting feedback from various citizens and organizations, the Post is joining the club.

Starting today, individuals may request to have articles about their arrests, citations, and criminal charges removed from our website if: 1. It's been at least five years since the offense; 2. the offense was not a felony; 3. the offense didn't involve violence, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct; and 4. the subject is not a government official or public figure. Whether an article will be removed, even if the individual making the request satisfies all four conditions, is solely at the discretion of the Winona Post.

Under this policy, articles about murders, police shootings, crimes by people in positions of public trust, and other violent or felony-level crimes will remain online. If someone had a misdemeanor DWI five years ago, their arrest would no longer appear on WinonaPost.com.

A few people have criticized such policies as erasing history a la "1984." That's compelling rhetoric, but it's just not the case here. Even after they are removed from our website, public records of these crimes will still exist in court systems (check out mncourts.gov), at law enforcement departments, and in the Winona Post archives, both in our own system and at the Winona County History Center. Employers can still conduct background checks on potential hires. This public information will still be accessible to the public, just not necessarily the top hit on Google. For years-old minor crimes, that's how it should be.

To make an unpublishing request, email winpost@winonapost.com or send a letter to Winona Post, c/o Winona Post Editor, P.O. Box 27, Winona, MN, 55987. Include "unpublishing request" in the subject line, and include your full name, contact information, and the date or URL of the article or police blotter entry you are requesting to be removed.



letters

A profile in servant leadership

From: Steven L. Blue

I was saddened to learn Tom Sawyer, head coach of the Winona State University football team, is retiring at the end of the 2021 season. His achievements as head coach are legendary; others are much more qualified than I am to comment on them, so I won't. What I do want to comment on is his extraordinary leadership, and the profound impact it has had on the teams he led.

You see, Tom was not all about winning football games, although he certainly did that. As I watched and had the opportunity to interact with Tom over the last 20 years, it was clear to me he was all about developing young people and teaching them the skills and attributes to be successful in life. He was all about the student athletes. If that happened to win football games, which it did, so much the better. In fact, Tom was such a legendary leader, I profiled him in my third book, "American Manufacturing 2.0: What Went Wrong And How To Make It Right."

Tom's leadership style can easily translate into a manufacturing environment. Or any environment for that matter. He embodies the qualities of a servant-leader, a term that is thrown around a lot these days, but few leaders have mastered it. Tom has.

Tom, old friend, I will miss you on the playing field. But I know the student athletes you coached and impacted over all these years, won't miss you at all. They will always remember the huge difference you made in their lives.

Growing climate coalition offers chance for bipartisanship

From: Ed Hahn
Winona

Our nation and world currently face a multitude of existential issues. At the same time we face historic levels of division and partisanship, and as we chart a course to the middle of the 21st century, it is imperative that we find common ground and work together to find solutions to the problems that threaten our collective future and that of future generations. Thankfully, a golden opportunity presents itself with the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (HR 2307).

A major tool in the fight against climate change, this legislation is a market-based approach that places a set price on industrial carbon generation and then pays that money directly back to taxpayers in the form of annual dividends. Historically this policy proposal has been a hard sell, but as the stakes grow increasingly higher, key players from all sides are beginning to voice their support.

In an article published on March 1, 2021, in The Wall Street Journal, it was reported that a draft statement from the American Petroleum Institute and its member companies support "economy-wide carbon pricing as the primary government climate policy instrument to reduce CO2 emissions while helping keep energy affordable, instead of mandates or prescriptive regulatory action." At the same time, the United States Chamber of Commerce has published a climate policy position statement on their website that supports "a market-based approach to accelerate [greenhouse gas] emissions reductions across the U.S. economy."

Meanwhile, Republican Senator Mitt Romney, of Utah, went on record during a February 23, 2021, interview with The New York Times saying, "I'm very open to a carbon tax, carbon dividend, where there's a tax on oil companies and coal companies and so forth." Senator Lisa Murkowski, of oil-rich Alaska, has also expressed her support for such a policy.

We need serious action on the climate front. But even more, we need bipartisan solutions. This coming together of industry, business, and political players in regard to market-based climate action is an opportunity we all should support. I encourage you to reach out to Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, and Rep. Jim Hagedorn to urge their support of this important legislation. Our future depends on it.

letters

City's upcoming compost site decision

From: Dick Gallien

Soon, for the first time, Winona will decide whether to continue supporting the compost site by your sewage plant or your Winona Farm community service compost site, which has been open every day from dawn until dark since 1990.

Healthy living soil is the foundation for healthy life. The dwindling numbers of birds, bees, bats and butterflies are the canaries in the mines. Most look at the foods for healthy soil as stuff to burn, bury or

landfill. This 175-acre farm, at the junction of one-plus miles of East and West Burns trout streams, is a rural oasis — protected from Winona's 27,000-plus and the 300 homes in Valley Oaks by 500-foot bluffs and from development by the Minnesota Land Trust — and an ideal place to demonstrate Winona's healthy cycle of life.

As your farm compost site, besides being open every day from dawn until dark, there will be no charge for dumping yard waste, wood waste, wood chips, and no charge for returning with free, manure-ized compost and woodchips for your yard and garden.

Essential are a few dedicated environmentalists and an attorney to form a non-profit that we can donate this farm to. This 500-acre rural basin has the potential to become far more than a compost site or another wealthy family's locked-gate estate.

Until then, we have the required "Driftless Ecology LLC."

Each year for 20 years, your yellow city trucks have dumped 400 loads of street leaves here, that are patiently searching for a large screener.

We are asking that your trees be dumped here also, so we can start turning them into lumber, fire wood and mostly biochar. (See www.nrri.umn.edu/natural-resources-research-institute/news/biochar, bit.ly/3e23ijC).

We'll have a couple goats again soon, who will start turning these weeds into milk. (See www.winonapost.com/Archives/ArticleID/65718/Where-are-all-the-goats).

Stop any Saturday or Sunday about 2 p.m. for a walk or wagon ride. For any questions, call 507-312-0194.

Chauvin verdict a step in the right direction

From: David Girod
Winona

Hearing the verdict in the Chauvin/Floyd trial, all I can say is, "I'm ecstatic!" I was seriously hoping for a guilty verdict. I hope Derek Chauvin spends an "enjoyable" time

in prison. Each of the three counts totals 75 years. We don't know in the end what the judge will decide for number of years. The George Floyd Act that our vice president mentioned will play an important part in police reform which this country sorely needs. Even if, as some people say, the number of bad apples in a given city's police force is few, one is too many.

And an officer should be able to know where their Taser versus Glock is. Making a mistake, as the officer did in Brooklyn Park, resulted in the loss of an inno-

cent Black life. Chauvin's fellow officers, should have intervened on behalf of Mr. Floyd, even if it meant knocking out Derek. They were recent graduates, I guess, of the academy. It was their duty to stop the crime.

One final comment, I see numerous "support your local police" signs around town. I'll support those who do their job legally, with compassion and without bias.

Senate Republican budget addresses Minnesota priorities

From: Senator Mike Goggin

We are in the home stretch of the 2021 legislative session. As I write this, the Senate is wrapping up passing a complete state government budget encompassing every issue area.

We are focusing on Minnesotans' priorities: balancing the budget without raising taxes; investing in roads and bridges without a gas tax increase, tab fee increase, or unpopular new mileage tax; funding public safety and police who keep us safe; and making sure schools have the resources they need to deliver the great education we've come to expect.

The Republican transportation budget provides \$3.03 billion for state road construction, development, and maintenance; \$2.25 billion for County and Municipal State Aid Roads; and \$334 million for Corridors of Commerce. The bill also provides \$60 million for local and small bridges and \$18.5 million for the Local Road Improvement Program. The bill also provides unprecedented levels of new, ongoing funding for small city and township roads.

Best of all: It doesn't raise gas taxes, license tab fees, or add a new tax on the miles you drive.

We also added several reforms to make things easier for drivers, like same-day purchases of license tabs from automated kiosks, and we cleaned up unconstitutional spending that should be going to roads and bridges.

Our education bill fully funds K-12

schools and transforms the way the state delivers education. Rather than continuing the status quo, we are emphasizing approaches with a track record of improving student performance in other states, like student literacy, mental health, and empowering parents.

Schools will receive a significant boost in funding of nearly \$3.5 billion from combined state and federal resources. Total state education aid will reach a record of \$20.6 billion for the upcoming two school years under the Republican proposal — approximately 42 percent of the state's general fund budget. When combined with local levies, schools will have more than \$29 billion in revenue for the next budget cycle.

Senate Republicans are proposing a \$681 million tax relief bill aimed at helping workers and small business owners recover from COVID-19 and jumpstarting the state's economy. The comprehensive legislation focuses on several key areas, prioritizing a reduction on property taxes for job creators, relief for in-home child-care providers, and support for affordable housing by reducing rates on low-income

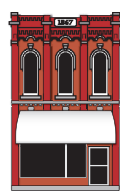
rental property.

The Senate's proposal contains no tax increases — a sharp contrast from tax plans from House Democrats and Gov. Tim Walz, both of whom have proposed more than \$1 billion in tax hikes.

The bill prioritizes full conformity for forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans many businesses used to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a bipartisan compromise allowing those who need relief most to exclude a portion of their pandemic unemployment benefits from their taxes.

Our plan also expands K-12 tax credits for working families, creates a property tax credit for in-home child care providers, and supports struggling hospitality businesses.

If you ever have any questions or feedback, or if you would like to set up an opportunity to meet, contact me any time at 651-296-5612 or sen.mike.goggin@senate.mn. It is a privilege to serve you!



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