ROAD WARRIORS NO MORE

>>> Bison baseball at home after almost 2 years of not playing at Newman, SPORTS <<<

The Forum

OF FARGO-MOORHEAD

COVID cases spike, but repeat of fall peak not expected

Experts: F-M population density helping to drive coronavirus surge

By Patrick Springer
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FARGO — Cass County is once again standing out among North Dakota's urban centers as the location seeing the most rapid growth in new COVID-19 cases.

As of Thursday, April 8, Cass County had 529 active cases, three times the 173 cases in Burleigh County, which includes Bismarck, and almost 10 times greater than Ward County, which includes Minot.

Health experts say the more rapid increase in Cass County, the most populous in North Dakota, stems from multiple factors, but many involve the metro area's dynamism and connectedness — attributes that help foster business activity, but also can be exploited by the coronavirus.

"The most likely explanation or the factor that contributes most is the increased density of population," said Dr. Avish Nagpal, Sanford Health's

chief infectious disease physician.

Greater density means more people living close to one another, more people gathering in crowded settings, more people traveling, more people attending events or socializing in bars and restaurants, he said.

But the Fargo-Moorhead metro area is likely a harbinger, and Nagpal expects North Dakota's other urban centers will start to see more rapid

SURGE: Page A4

Fargo mayor gives residents 'a break' from restrictions

By Barry Amundson
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FARGO — Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney, who is the swing vote on the City Commission on pandemic emergency restrictions or mask mandates, said with spring in the air he's willing to loosen up and give residents a bit more room to breathe.

Thus, he voted to end the mask mandate in the city on March 22. This past week, he was joined

Mahoney

by the rest of the commission in unanimously ending his emergency powers.

Mahoney said his decisions are data-driven. With many of the key indicators for the virus in the city currently stable or trending downward, he said he stands by his decision. Adding to his optimism

is the 50.9% of eligible residents in the county who have had at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Nonetheless, the mayor, who is a physician, said the push in the coming few weeks is to get even more people vaccinated by the end of April.

In the meantime, Mahoney said he was "willing to give it a break" when it comes to pandemic restrictions.

BREAK: Page A4

David Samson / The Forum
Laura Ramirez talks about self-defense and gun safety with real estate agents on Sept. 18, 2018, in Fargo.

'Stand-your-ground' legislation advances out of ND Senate

If House concurs with changes, legislation would go to Burgum

By Jeremy Turley
Forum News Service

BISMARCK — The North Dakota Senate has approved a bill that would significantly lower the legal bar for using deadly force in self-defense.

The so-called "stand-your-ground" legislation would expand the existing "castle" law that permits the use of deadly force at one's home or workplace but requires an effort to escape the attacker in public places unless one's life is in danger. The bill would

eliminate the "duty to retreat" and allow the use of deadly force to prevent a violent felony anywhere a person is legally permitted to be.

North Dakotans are already legally justified in the use of deadly force if they cannot escape a life-threatening attack.

The upper chamber voted 35-10 on Thursday, April 8, to send an amended House Bill 1498 back to the House of Representatives,

BILL: Page A3

INSIDE TODAY'S FORUM

Today's weather

NEWS: Wildfire in Theodore Roosevelt National Park 65% contained, **PAGE A6**

▲ **50°**
▼ **33°**

Showers
Details, B8

Rainy reprieve

David Samson / The Forum
The coneflower mural along First Avenue South and Eighth Street is refracted in raindrops on Thursday, April 8. Over half an inch of precipitation was measured at Hector Airport from Wednesday morning through Thursday afternoon, a reprieve from drought conditions. A chance of rain is forecast for much of the area through Friday.

'Not an ounce of oxygen left in his body'

Medical experts point to lack of oxygen in Floyd's death

By Matthew Guerry
Forum News Service

An expert medical witness on Thursday, April 8, testified that one portion of footage from the night of May 25 showed the exact moment that George Floyd drew his last breath.

Chicago-area pulmonology and critical care specialist Dr. Martin Tobin, who reviewed footage and other materials pertaining to Floyd's death as an expert witness for the prosecution, said that, by his math, former Minneapolis Police officer Derek Chauvin then continued to kneel on Floyd's back and neck for another 3 minutes.

"At that point, there's not an ounce of oxygen left in his body," Tobin testified.

REUTERS / Jane Rosenberg
In this courtroom sketch, pulmonologist Dr. Martin Tobin testifies Thursday, April 8, in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin for second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

His testimony featured illustrations depicting Floyd's final moments.

Tobin was the first to take the stand Thurs-

day in what was a highly technical day of testimony in the trial of Derek Chauvin, facing murder and manslaughter

charges in Floyd's 2020 death.

It was the first criminal case in which the Loyola University professor of medicine took part, having beforehand testified mostly in malpractice cases. He was not paid for his time but volunteered it at the request of state prosecutors, he said, because he had "some knowledge that would be helpful to explain how Mr. Floyd died."

Because Floyd was pinned in a prone position on solid ground, according to Tobin, he was essentially unable to expand his chest and, with his airway constricted by Chauvin's knee, could not draw in enough air to breathe

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