

Winter storm leaves mark on area

Several area events cancelled amid snow, cold, high winds

By Scott Thoma
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Just when we start to see the spring light at the end of the winter tunnel, we get another blast of snow, cold and wind.

Although initial weather reports called for 6-8 inches of snow in the Minneota area, the recent winter storm dropped less than expected, around 3-4 inches on Tuesday. Even so, high winds made driving treacherous on drifted roads.

Students had a digital learning day on Tuesday as administrators decided the roads were not safe for buses to travel on.

The City of Minneota de-

clared a snow emergency on Monday with plowing beginning at 4 a.m. Vehicles parked on the roads during the snow emergency were also ticketed beginning at that time.

The Minneota girls and boys basketball road games scheduled for Monday night were postponed to a later date. The girls were scheduled to play at Mayer Lutheran, a 125-mile drive to Mayer. That game was rescheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 24. The boys basketball team was slated to play Dawson-Boyd in Dawson and was postponed until Monday, Feb. 28.

Basketball and Community

Education athletic after-school practices were cancelled on Tuesday.

Frigid temperatures also made it uncomfortable for those working outside. Tuesday's high temperature was -3 degrees with a wind chill factor of -27. Winds were around 25 miles per hour with gusts up to 30 miles per hour, causing poor visibility in some areas.

Although roads in town were slick from compacted snow, Police Chief Bill Bolt reported no "fender benders" or any other type of accidents. He also gave out no tickets for vehicles parked on the streets during the snow emergency.

Wednesday was sunny but cold. Roads continued to be icy in the morning on Wednesday as road chemicals do not work well in cold temperatures and vehicle exhaust will freeze to exposed pavement, causing black ice.

The high on Wednesday was 0 degrees, and the wind chill was a brutal -36 degrees.

Temperatures are expected to warm up as the weekend approaches. Saturday's high is expected to be 33 degrees, Sunday will be 25 degrees, Monday around 32 degrees, and Tuesday near 40 degrees.

Maybe there is a light at the end of the tunnel after all.



There were few people out and about on Jefferson Street in the business district early Tuesday afternoon as snow and high winds made traveling difficult. Mascot photo by LuAnn Fier.

BIN THERE, DONE THAT

Bot rescued unhurt after being stuck in grain bin for over hour

By Scott Thoma
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His blood pressure increased well above normal, but Rick Bot otherwise escaped unscathed from a potentially disastrous farm incident on Feb. 15.

Bot was loading out beans on his brother Ben's farm 10 miles northeast of Minneota and 10 miles west of Cottonwood. He had climbed down inside a 24-foot grain bin to break apart beans that had formed into frozen clumps so they could go through the auger.

"I was using a long-handled spade with a 9- or 10-foot handle to break up the beans," he said.

When a large chunk was broken up, the auger drew the beans in faster than Bot anticipated and in a matter of moments he was drawn to the bottom of the bin and stood waist deep in beans. Bot was in no danger of getting his feet caught in the auger as there is a guard on top of it, but he was unable to pull himself free beans in order to climb back up the ladder inside the bin.

At 3:56 p.m., Bot pulled out his cell phone and called his brother who was just outside the bin.

"Ben shut off the auger and climbed up the bin and looked down through the top and saw I was waist deep and couldn't get out," Bot told. "We really didn't have anything that would work to try and pull me out because I was stuck in there pretty good, so I told Ben to call 911."

Because Ben's farm is in Vallery Township, the call went out to the Cottonwood Fire Department and EMT personnel.

The first man on the scene was a farm neighbor, who was also a member of the Cottonwood Fire Department. He lowered a ratchet strap down to Bot, who hooked it under his shoulders. But that maneuver didn't work as Bot was wedged in too tight.

Once the other firemen arrived around 4:15 p.m., they lowered six to eight panels that were approximately 18" x 2' down into the bin that are designed for these types of accidents in grain bins. The panels form a circle around the trapped person, while also forming a wall to keep the beans outside the panels from converging on the person. A pail was then lowered down to Bot.

Several firemen then positioned themselves at various heights on the ladder inside the bin. Bot would then fill the bucket with beans inside the circular panels and hand it to the first man on the assembly line and eventually brought to the top and dumped. Bot repeated the process several times until the beans were below his knees.

A tie-strap was then sent down and Bot squatted down in a sitting position and hooked the strap under his knees.

"The rescue workers were able to pull me out that way and I was able to climb up the ladder to get out," Bot explained.



Photo above: Rick Bot is assisted by members of the Cottonwood Fire Department after being removed from a grain bin last Tuesday. Below left: Members of the Cottonwood Fire Department and First Responders get panels ready to lower into the grain bin where Rick Bot was stuck waist deep in beans. Below right: Bot climbs down the ladder of the bin after being rescued. Contributed photos

When Bot emerged out of the top of the bin to begin his descent back down on the outside ladder, the time was 5:06 p.m. All told, he was inside the bin for well over an hour.

"My feet started getting cold because of the frozen beans," he said. "I wasn't in there that long, but the mold dust was starting to get to me because I didn't have a mask on."

Because Rick's wife, Ruth, was planning to go to Sioux Falls that day, Rick figured she wasn't home.

Bot Continued on Page 4



Emily Hoffmann, Darwin Dyce and Pete Lothringer of "Kindred Spirits" will be among those performing at the Opera Hall in April. Contributed photo

Music to Opera Hall's ears

Dyce arranges for groups to perform 'live music' in historic room in April

By Scott Thoma
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With a desire to "encourage the re-emergence of live music", Darwin Dyce is organizing a musical event at the historic Opera Hall in Minneota.

The event, called Kindred Spirits and Friends, is scheduled to be on stage Sunday, April 24 and will run from 2-4 p.m. Dyce, his daughter, Emily Hoffmann, and guitar player

Pete Lothringer are the members of Kindred Spirits.

"I am humbled to be playing with Pete, a most excellent guitar player, composer and well-trained musician," said Dyce. "Emily has an impressive array of singing experience and brings me joy hearing her adding her voice to any songs we do."

Dyce also has other reasons he wants to bring music to the

Opera Hall.

"One reason is we need to find ways to build community despite our differences and music is a universal language," he said. "Another reason is that I am proud of the work that has been done to the Opera Hall by the members of the Society for the Preservation of Minneota's Heritage (SPMH). They have done amazing work restoring the Opera Hall. People need to

know what treasures are in the community."

Among those who will be performing at this event will be Dyce and Hoffmann, whose music is rooted in jazz and blues. Visiting musicians include a group from Granite Falls and Watson and another group who has been performing in the Montevideo area for several years.

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