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POSTBULLETIN

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Pine Island nursing home had litany of problems

BY MATTHEW STOLLE
Post Bulletin

PINE ISLAND, Minn. — By the time of the state's takeover of Pine Haven Care Center in Pine Island last Saturday, the nursing home was swamped in unpaid bills and the care of its more than 50 residents were threatened over concerns of a potential employee exodus.

According to Ramsey County court documents, it faced a litany of creditors. Pine Haven's assets and bank account had been frozen. The bank account it used to pay expenses had only \$1,500 in it, down from \$200,000 last year. Employee insurance wasn't being paid.

Its CEO, Marcus Parence, had instructed the director of nursing to get medications out of an emergency kit, because the pharmacy it relied on for residents' medications refused to provide them without getting paid. Several employees had resigned over the center's financial instability, and there were concerns more were heading for the doors.

"If Pine Haven Care Center's current staff quit their jobs due to nonpayment of wages, salaries or health insurance premiums, there would be no one to take care of the 52 residents at the facility," said state health commissioner Jan Malcolm in one court filing.

Even the human resources management company hired by Pine Haven, UKG, for payroll services threatened to not issue payroll until it got paid.

By Saturday, after amassing a mountain of evidence of Pine Haven's financial distress and inability to pay its bills, the state department took control of the beleaguered facility and put Pathway Health, a professional management organization, in charge of its operations. State health officials called the center's financial situation "precarious."

"There is reason to believe care at the facility is compromised," according to one document.

The nursing home is licensed to house 70 residents but currently houses 52. It is licensed by the state

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Photos by Joe Ahlquist / Post Bulletin

Tim Eckstein, of Maryville, Missouri, and his daughter, Sara Eckstein, use Lime scooters Monday afternoon around Rochester.

NEW FLEET IN TOWN

Lime's Gen4 e-scooters arrive in Rochester

BY THEODORE TOLLEFSON
Post Bulletin

ROCHESTER
Rochester is ready for a fresh squeeze of Lime.

Both the e-scooters and e-bikes can be rented by Rochester residents and visitors looking for a no-hassle, quick way to navigate around the downtown area.

The newest version of the Lime e-scooters has hit Med City. The city has contracted with the company to provide 300 of the Gen4 e-scooters and 50 e-bikes, said Jacob Tugendrajch, a communications lead with Lime.

For those looking to use these new e-scooters, the ride-sharing and payment options for their use can be found in the Lime app. Once the app is downloaded by users, the app will ask for a phone number or email to sign up for an account if users don't already have one.

First-time users will then be asked to enter credit card information for payment. The average charge of use



An electric Lime scooter is seen Monday in Rochester.

for the Lime Gen4 Scooter in Rochester is \$3.50 for the first 10 minutes, then 29 cents per minute that follows. The Lime app also asks for driver's license information to verify the age of the user.

While Lime scooters can be located all over Rochester, they are generally found around the downtown area on sidewalks, where they have been left by other riders or by individuals who locate and

charge the scooters. "The way these new scooters came into town is a representation of our growing relationship

See SCOOTER, Page 12

8 things to know about the Chateau Theatre

Venue will be open for sneak peeks during Thursdays Downtown

BY RANDY PETERSEN
Post Bulletin

ROCHESTER — The historic Chateau Theatre's doors will be open to the public Thursday for the first time since Threshold Arts signed a three-year operating agreement with the city.

"I know folks are eager to start seeing things happen in here," Threshold's founding director Naura Anderson said of the city-owned building in Peace Plaza.

The building is largely how

it was left when Exhibits Development Group and the city prematurely ended their 2019 operating agreement a year ago, following struggles related to COVID restrictions.

Anderson said some elements, including a divider between retail space and performance space, will remain, but changes are being sought to improve performance options and provide room for a variety of uses.

"Our goal is to keep everything in here as flexible as possible," she said.

While the Chateau isn't

yet open on a daily basis, Anderson said the goal is to open the doors each week during Thursdays Downtown to provide a sneak peek at the work that is underway.

Here are a few things to know about the plans:

1. Retail space will emerge as Thursdays Downtown continues.

Threshold Arts will eventually feature items from local artists in a retail space in the front portion of the Chateau.

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Randy Petersen / Post Bulletin

Threshold Arts will hold an open house Thursday at the Chateau Theatre in downtown Rochester.

StormTRACKER



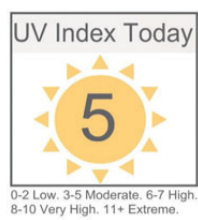
Jared Piepenburg, Jesse Ritka, Chief Meteorologist John Wheeler, Lydia Blume, Robert Poynter

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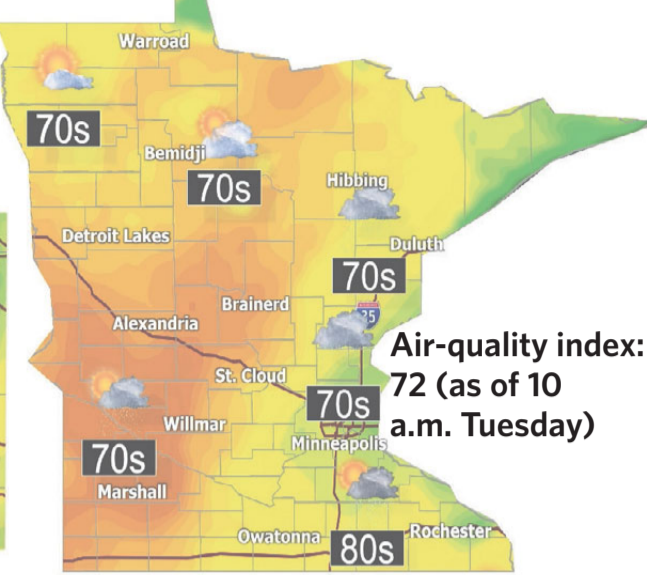
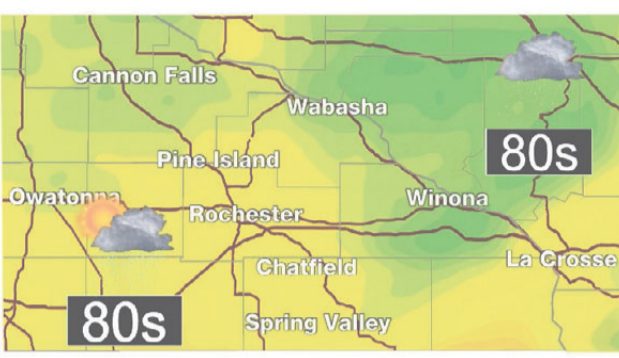


Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
83/62 Scattered Thunderstorms Wind: SW 12 mph	85/60 Mostly Sunny Wind: W 18 mph	84/62 Sunny Wind: N 8 mph	86/68 Sunny Wind: S 13 mph	92/76 Sunny Wind: SW 15 mph	96/72 Mostly Sunny Wind: SW 14 mph	92/72 Scattered Thunderstorms Wind: W 11 mph

*Average wind speed for each day



Area highs for today



Air-quality index: 72 (as of 10 a.m. Tuesday)

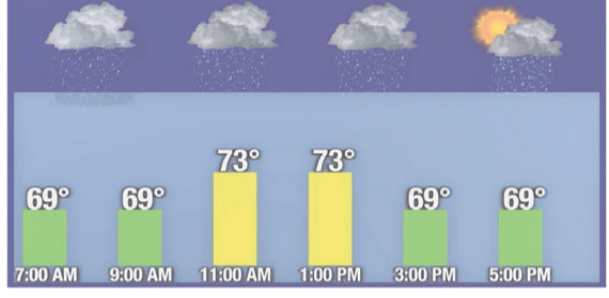
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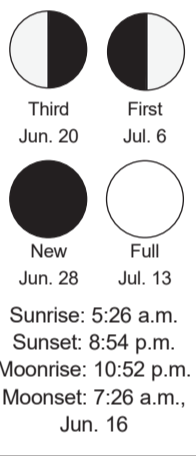
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Regional Weather	Today		Tomorrow		Regional Weather	Today		Tomorrow	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo		Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Albert Lea, MN	83	62	85	60	Mankato, MN	83	62	85	60
Duluth, MN	70	57	72	55	Marshall, MN	78	63	87	60
Eau Claire, WI	75	59	85	59	Minneapolis, MN	75	64	84	62
International Falls, MN	79	58	71	53	Moorhead, MN	80	58	79	55
La Crosse, WI	84	62	88	62	St. Cloud, MN	80	64	81	58



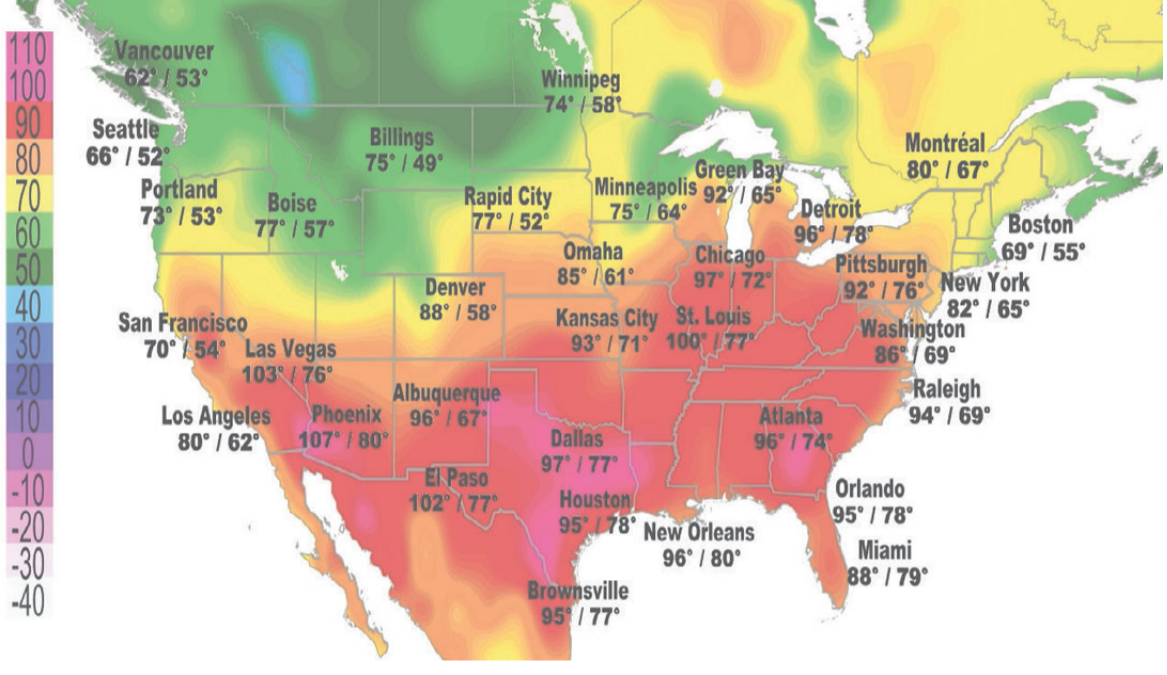
StormTRACKER Forecast



Almanac Through 6 pm Monday

Temperature	High	Low
Monday	77°	64°
Normal	77°	57°
Record	98° in 1987	36° in 1933

Precipitation	In Inches
Monday	1.51"
Month To Date	1.98"
Departure From Avg Month To Date	-0.40"
Year To Date	16.54"
Departure From Avg Year To Date	2.26"



Scooter

From page 1

with Lime as both the electric scooters and the electric bikes are used more frequently each year," said Kevin Bright, City of Rochester and DMC EDA Energy and Sustainability Coordinator. "We've had good ridership over the

past couple of years that Lime has become a pilot program in Rochester. We're excited to get the new e-scooters this year in the hopes that it entices even more people to try them out and get out of their cars." According to the company website, the Gen4 scooter has a wider foot board, making it more stable for handling,

and the longer-lasting battery means more power and less charging for scooters and e-bikes. "The most important thing about these e-scooters is the swappable batteries and that makes them more sustainable," Tugendrajch said. "The scooter itself is a little bit bigger, a little bit sturdier than previous Lime

models. One of the big things that cities really love is the kickstand is now a dual kickstand that has legs on both sides, which prevents scooters tipping over and keeps streets free from clutter." Lime's commitment to help reduce the amount of carbon produced from transportation services was an attracting factor to Bright and

other city officials in Rochester to make a deal with the company for their e-scooters. Bright explained how he believes these new Gen4 e-scooters will benefit riders across the city of Rochester. "I know the technology is newer, so there's a little bit more ability for us to control when and where they can go full speed," Bright said. "I

think it's with this newer technology comes some of this ability to pilot some new things that can enhance the safety of the community members while using these scooters." As of now, Lime only has e-scooters in three cities in Minnesota, including Rochester. The other two are Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Nursing

From page 1

and is certified by the federal government to participate in the federal Medicare program and Medicaid, a state/federal program. Documents noted that MDH investigated a complaint in May concerning Pine Haven's failure to ensure its staff were aware of a resident's peanut allergy. When the resident was served dessert containing peanuts, the resident had an anaphylaxis reaction and was sent to the hospital. "One of the concerns that we had was that there was an immediate threat for the care of the residents, because it takes people to take care of (nursing home residents)," said Maria King, MDH's director of the health regulation division in explaining the state's decision to intervene. King said receivership, a court-appointed tool that helps troubled organizations, allowed the state to "offer some supports to the facility and make sure that they would get their payroll met." The state could potentially close the facility and transfer the nursing home's residents to other facilities, but King said she hoped that would not be the outcome. King noted that the facility is supported by the local Pine Island community and that the physical plant is in good shape. "What we're hopeful for is that this managing agent can help to get things back on the right track," King said. "They'll, of course, do an assessment and then decisions will be made accordingly based



Pine Haven Care Center is seen Tuesday in Pine Island, Minn.

Andrew Link / Post Bulletin

on what we find there." King said she didn't know why Pine Haven was in such financial trouble and the extent of its financial difficulties won't be known until the assessment is completed. State takeovers of nursing homes happen rarely. It has happened only half a dozen times in the last 15 years in Minnesota. Recent examples include Camden Care Center in Minneapolis, which entered receivership in 2014. The facility stayed open but under new ownership. In 2015, Infinia Owatonna and Infinia Faribault both closed due to financial difficulties. Last year, Twin

Cities Gardens nursing home in Minneapolis closed due to numerous financial and physical plant issues. Nursing homes have been challenged by financial and staffing challenges in the past, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. King said she didn't know at this point whether Pine Haven's situation was an outlier or a sign of an industry-wide crisis. "I'm not sure yet," King said. "Certainly, we know that staffing is an issue in this facility. And it's an issue in a lot of facilities in the state and nationwide." MDH opened an investigation

into the Pine Island nursing home after receiving a complaint last month that the center would be unable to make payroll. The complaint was assessed by MDH officials as an "immediate jeopardy" situation, which is the most egregious level, King said. MDH staff visited the facility early this month and interviewed facility staff, vendors and creditors of Pine Haven. The investigation revealed a "pattern of failing to meet ongoing financial obligations." The nursing home was failing to pay employee wages and health insurance in a timely fashion, as well as a pharmacy,

a food vendor and its payroll services provider. King said one resident, a new admission, did not get their medication for about a day, because of the pharmacy's refusal to provide it without getting paid. It turned out not to be a life-threatening situation. An arrangement was made with the pharmacy to ensure "that there was not a disruption in the medications," King said. Court records reveal that when MDH officials interviewed Randy Hoffarth, chairman of the Pine Haven board of directors, he reported that the prior week the board had learned that the nursing home's assets and bank accounts had been frozen. When he went to the bank to determine the reason, he came away empty handed. He told MDH officials that Parente, the nursing home's administrator, had not told the board that its bank account and a separate account holding resident funds had so little money. Attempts to reach Parente through Facebook were unsuccessful. Officials say there have been other allegations and complaints made against the facility within the last year. But the state investigation did not identify "serious issues" with the quality of care provided at the Pine Haven as part of the current inquiry. "The big concern in his particular receivership was the financial distress that the facility was in," she said. "It takes people to meet the needs of those individual residents. And those people who are doing the good work are expected to get a paycheck."