

Fargo-Moorhead crowd protests inaction on climate change

By Barry Amundson
The Forum

FARGO — Activists held a march through downtown and speeches at Fargo City Hall on Friday, Sept. 24, to raise awareness about the threat of climate change and to call for local action to go along with worldwide efforts.

Martin Fredricks IV, who has founded the local nonprofit Knights of the Climate Covenant, a group he said is for “everyday people,” helped organize the event, which attracted about 75 people of all ages, but mostly a younger crowd.

The local protest was part of “Fridays For Future,” founded by Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. It was one of more than 1,000 events worldwide.

Fredricks said his efforts are in part driven by worries for his three children and their future but told the crowd the other reason was one simple word: Hope.

The hope expressed

by Fredricks and the crowd was that people could join together in the call for “system change, not climate change.”

Local politicians joined student leaders from Minnesota State University Moorhead and Concordia College speaking at the event.

“(The) greed of corporations is putting profits over people,” said MSUM student body president Jess Mueller, who is studying political science and sustainability.

Mueller urged the crowd to channel its anger into demanding action from local city councils, school boards and campuses.

“It will take electing more people who believe in climate change,” she added.

The effects of climate change present themselves in floods, droughts, hurricanes and wildfires seen across the nation this year, said David Kelm, a senior at Concordia and intern with the college’s



Photos by Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Environmental advocates walk down the sidewalk along Broadway in downtown Fargo on their way to Fargo City Hall during a march for climate justice on Friday. Leading the march was Fargo’s Tracy L. Wilkie of the state Democratic party and a tribal member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.

sustainability program who helped organize an environmental student organization.

State Rep. Ruth Buffalo, D-Fargo, and State Sen. Tim Mather were also at the rally and urged the rallygoers to get involved politically.

“It’s not my movement, your movement, but our movement,” Buffalo said.

Readers can reach Forum reporter Barry Amundson at 701-451-5665 or bamundson@forumcomm.com



Martin C. Fredricks IV, founder of the nonprofit Knights of the Climate Covenant of Fargo, introduces the next speaker to the crowd during a march for climate justice on Friday at Fargo City Hall.



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LOCAL NEWS

POOCHES IN THE POOL



Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Above and below: Dogs swim, play and shake off during the Moorhead “Doggy Dip” event on Monday at Northeast Park. The event cost \$5 per dog and all proceeds benefit the Centennial and River Oaks dog parks.



Fargo-Moorhead Science Museum names leader

By April Baumgarten
The Forum

FARGO — The Fargo-Moorhead Science Museum has chosen its leader.

Josey Balenger became the executive director of the museum on Aug. 1, according to a news release sent Monday, Aug. 15, by the organi-



Balenger

zation.

“The F M S M Board of Directors is thrilled to have Josey join us to lead our efforts to build this extraordinary new science museum for Fargo-Moor-

head,” Museum Board of Directors President Ken Brazzerol said in a statement. “Josey brings a wide range of museum and development experience and will be a tremendous leader for our team and our community as we continue to bring this vision to life.”

The museum is in the process of raising \$40

million to \$60 million to open in Fargo, West Fargo or Moorhead. The group has raised \$1.3 million and could announce the museum’s location in late September or early October, Board of Directors member Danni Melquist said in an email.

“We hope to open our doors within the next

three to five years,” she said.

Directors have billed the museum as a place for curious minds to explore and engage in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It will feature interactive exhibits and programming, the release said.

Balenger has more

than 20 years of experience in the museum and philanthropy industry, the release said. Before joining the local science museum, she worked for the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

Readers can reach Forum reporter April Baumgarten at 701-241-5417 or apbaumgarten@forumcomm.com. Follow her on Twitter @aprilbaumsaway.

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COMING UP ON WDAY TV

Tonight on WDAY 6 News: Student mental health: Meet West Fargo Schools' first behavioral health and wellness director and find out how she is working to increase support for students.



NEWS | FARGO | News reporting

Despite backlash, all-ages drag show in Fargo draws parents and kids

Scarlet Vision Productions held its first all-ages drag show in Fargo this month. One city official from western North Dakota said performers are trying to "corrupt" youth, while parents said they brought their kids to the show to give them a wider view of the world.



Host and performer Tequila Mockingbird lets a young crowd member say a few words about being yourself during the all-ages "Can't Drag Us Down" drag show on July 16, 2022, outside the Elks Lodge in Fargo.

Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

By [Robin Huebner](#)

July 25, 2022 04:48 AM

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FARGO — With names like Tequila Mockingbird, B.J. Armani and Miss Kitty, drag performers on the outdoor stage wore rainbow costumes and

sparkly capes while they danced and lip-synced to pop songs in front of a crowd that included a few dozen children.

The “Can’t Drag Us Down” event this month at the Elks Lodge in north Fargo, which its promoter said was attended by about 250 people, may have been the first ever all-ages drag show in the city. Another all-ages show put on by a different promoter was held in Bismarck about a month prior.

Both events drew families with children of varying ages, and a heavy dose of criticism from a Washburn, North Dakota, man who started the Facebook page Protect North Dakota Kids.

Keith Hapip Jr. is executive director of the organization that he hopes will become a nonprofit. Hapip, who's also a newly elected Washburn city commissioner, said his main issue is with the all-ages aspect of the shows.

All Ages Drag Show

In posts leading up to the events, the Facebook page he runs claimed to “expose” the drag performers “coming to corrupt the youth.”

“When children are involved, that’s where the line is crossed,” Hapip said in a phone interview from his home in Washburn.

The Forum sat in on the Fargo show on July 16 and talked with some adults whose children were with them.

“We have our dollar bills ready,” said Greta Lauerman of Fargo, referring to the practice of tipping the performers.



Greta Lauerman and her kids throw some money in a basket for the performers during the "Can't Drag Us Down" drag show on July 16, 2022, in the Elks Lodge parking lot in Fargo. Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

Lauerman brought her sons, 9-year-old Kilian and 7-year-old Roscoe, to see the “fancy dancers” perform in the Elks Lodge parking lot.

“I just don't want them to think this is weird, or end up in a situation where they would bully or get bullied in the future,” she said.

Kara Gloe of Moorhead brought her daughters, 10-year-old Leona and 9-year-old Frankie. Beforehand, she talked with them about the show and Hapip's view that watching a drag show hurts kids.

“They were totally confused,” Gloe said. “Why would people dressing up and putting on makeup be harmful to children?” she said her daughters asked.

Performers said they don't understand Hapip's stance, either.

Stephanie Dockter, 27, of Fargo, who goes by "Just Jeff" on stage, said it's wrong to say they're "grooming" children in any way.

"That's just far from the truth, because they're just like me ... coming out, and saying to themselves, I need a home and I need a community," Dockter said.



Miss Kitty performs for an excited crowd during the "Can't Drag Us Down" drag show on July 16, 2022, in the parking lot of the Elks Lodge in Fargo.
Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

Not hate, but 'love speech'

Keith Hapip Jr., 32, was born and raised in Williston, attended high school in Bismarck and moved to Washburn about 40 miles north of Bismarck three years ago.

He said he grew up in the Catholic faith but it never "made sense" to him, so he became a "declared atheist" for a time before checking out a church at his brother's suggestion and becoming a born-again Christian.

Now a Reformed Baptist, Hapip has been married for six years and he and his wife have three children.

He works as a paramedic, owns a small woodworking business and was elected as a Washburn commissioner in the city of 1,300 people in June.

Protect North Dakota Kids is described as a political organization on Facebook and has about 350 followers, a list of whom is not visible.

Hapip said he didn't protest the Fargo all-ages drag show because his organization doesn't have much of a presence here yet, but he did protest the Bismarck show on June 18 using a microphone and wireless speaker, saying he was "preaching the gospel" to attendees.

Sarah Galbraith, 42, of Grand Forks, goes by the stage name "B.J. Armani." Galbraith, who performed at both all-ages shows, said Hapip was yelling at kids and their parents that God's love was not for them because they were going to the event.

"How sad is that, that someone would have to find hate and tell other people that they're unworthy of love," Galbraith said.



B.J. Armani performs for an enthusiastic all-ages crowd during the "Can't Drag Us Down" drag show on July 16, 2022, outside the Elks Lodge in Fargo.
Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

Hapip doesn't consider his words and actions as hate speech, but rather a non-affirmation.

"A hateful thing would come from an angry or mad heart," Hapip said. "We would actually consider it love speech."

He doesn't see an issue with an elected city official taking this stand, even though his LGBTQ constituents in Washburn might find it hurtful.

"I took an oath and I swore to uphold the Constitution, not people's feelings. I do care what the people think obviously, and I would take that into account without showing partiality," he said.

Hapip said he hopes Protect North Dakota Kids can be involved in educational conferences and perhaps a podcast in the future, with topics including LGBTQ and critical race theory "propaganda."

He said he hopes to "just really help people out with a worldview education, as opposed to what's being fed to them by every single other major media outlet."



Performer Just Jeff dances during the "Can't Drag Us Down" drag show on July 16, 2022, in the parking lot of the Elks Lodge in Fargo.
Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

All-ages shows vs. 18+ drag

Hapip said the all-ages shows are evidence of drag performers trying to gain an audience of children.

Kyle Anderson, 34, of West Fargo, who goes by "Tequila Mockingbird" on stage, said they're simply doing all-ages shows because people have been asking for them.

Anderson is a producer with Scarlet Vision Productions, which held the all-ages show in Fargo and promotes monthly drag shows and other events for 18+ audiences.

The differences between all-ages and 18+ shows are primarily in music and costume choices, Anderson said. The all-ages show also had volunteer security on hand, posted around the perimeter.

Songs at the all-ages show included hits by Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran and Dua Lipa and costumes worn included tank tops, jean jackets, skirts, leggings and pantsuits.

"Just Jeff," with spiked blonde hair and wearing a Hawaiian shirt and overall shorts, worked through the crowd and tossed suckers onto tables.

At times, children briefly danced or gave hugs to performers, and tips were either handed over or placed into bowls that were passed around.



Performer Jessika from the Volleyball Team dances with crowd members during the "Can't Drag Us Down" drag show on July 16, 2022, outside the Elks Lodge in Fargo.
Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

"Miss Kitty" walked the stage in a pink wig, tights, a star-studded leotard, a rainbow train attached at the waist and a flowing cape with the words "LGBTQ" and "HUMAN" on each arm.

"Tequila Mockingbird" wore a form-fitting, upper-thigh length cheetah-print dress with heels and a curly, pink-tinged wig.

Even an 18+ show isn't overly sexual, Galbraith said, but instead gives the hosts on the mic a chance to talk about safe sex, politics and human rights, and say a few swear words here and there.

Anderson let one of those words slip when talking to the crowd about growing up in a small Minnesota town.

As a young boy in a religious family, Anderson was encouraged to hunt, fish and “shoot guns” as pastimes, but Anderson shunned those in favor of playing dress-up.

When Anderson came out at age 16, friends of the family suggested a drastic remedy.

“My mom was very deep into the church. Her friends told her to get me shock therapy. She did not do it ... because she knew I was different and she loved me anyway,” Anderson said.

Anderson went on to tell the children in attendance that if they’re in a situation where they don’t feel safe or loved, they can “choose” their family of support.

“You are the next generation to come up ... and please don’t f*** it up,” Anderson said, which was met with laughter and applause.

After that, one child in the audience was handed the mic and shouted, “Be who you are.”



Asher Alexander performs as the character Genie from the Disney movie “Aladdin” during the “Can’t Drag Us Down” all-ages drag show July 16, 2022, outside the Elks Lodge in Fargo. Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

A vow to 'keep doing what we do'

A parent whose child is questioning their sexuality or gender identity may have brought them to the all-ages drag show to help them realize they're not alone.

For other parents, it was a deliberate move to give their kids a broader understanding of the world.

Kayla Heller of Moorhead said she attends drag shows often and her four daughters, ages 7 to 13, were excited to come to the all-ages show.

"I want my kids to experience everything in life and make their own opinions about whatever they would have opinions about," Heller said.

Gloe describes her daughters as budding artists, and said she wants them to see all kinds of art forms and varieties of people, especially those "living their most authentic lives."

Lauerman said she's saddened that some of her LGBTQ friends weren't comfortable coming out when they were younger, and she wouldn't want that to happen to her kids.

"I want them to know that if that's what they end up being or if that's what their friends are, that doesn't change who they are," Lauerman said.

She said there's "no chance" of indoctrination.

"I don't believe people are going to be something that they aren't, and if you celebrate yourself this way, we want to celebrate with you," Lauerman said.

An 18+ drag show titled "Cruel Summer" will be held Saturday, Aug. 6, at the Fargo Elks Lodge. Another all-ages show called "Oh My Gourd, It's Fall," is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 10, at the same location.

There will likely be more criticism of those shows, but Anderson said it's hoped that Hapip will eventually move on.

"Stop with your weird habit, because we're going to keep doing what we do," Anderson said.



Host and performer Tequila Mockingbird sings and interacts with the crowd during the all-ages "Can't Drag Us Down" drag show on July 16, 2022, outside the Elks Lodge in Fargo. Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

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By [Robin Huebner](#)

Huebner is a 35+ year veteran of broadcast and print journalism in Fargo-Moorhead.

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FMCT'S SOLD-OUT 'ELF' SHOWS WHAT A GIFT THE NEW SPACE IS

By John Lamb
The Forum

Moorhead

The Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre got a Christmas present early this year — in February — when the city of Moorhead offered it a new home in the Hjemkomst Center.

While the troupe opened the new space in October, more in the community will see just what an impressive gift it is with the current run of “Elf The Musical.”

Christmas has felt like stockings full of coal the last two years for FMCT. The troupe was in the middle of “The Christmas Carol” in December 2019 when a crack in the roof of its original Island Park location was discovered and the building was shut down. The company was forced to produce shows in a space meant for rehearsals and classes — and then COVID-19 hit in early 2020, making performing in front of live audiences a challenge.

The new FMCT space in the Hjemkomst opened in October, but its inaugural run of “Young



Forum file photos

Above: Jovie and Buddy the Elf, played by Emily Kautz and Jake Sells, put up ornaments on the Christmas tree in Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre’s “Elf the Musical.” **Top:** Tracy Frank, left, Roman Indrehus, John Indrehus, Paul Bougie and Jake Sells gather together as their characters Emily, Michael and Walter Hobbs, Santa and Buddy the Elf in Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre’s “Elf the Musical.”

Frankenstein” was cut short when some of the cast got COVID-19. The handful of shows produced sold out fast.

So far, the second run has

been a charm. Director and choreographer Dawn Gunderson unwrapped “Elf” last week, and audiences have been as excited as Buddy seeing Santa.

In the title role, Jake Sells has all of the energy and enthusiasm needed to power the North Pole. He plays Buddy wide-eyed and childlike — in a good way — as he romps through fun songs like “Sparklejollytwinklejingley” as he gets Macy’s ready for Christmas.

Just like the 2003 movie, Buddy is out to find his father after being raised by elves in Santa’s workshop for 30 years. Walter Hobbs, however, wants nothing to do with the son he never knew he had as his workaholic life barely leaves room for his wife, Emily, and their son Michael.

Of course, the addition of the songs is the biggest difference between the play and the 2003 film. The music and lyrics by Matthew Sklar and Chad Beguelin — Tony-nominated for their work on the musical adaptation of “The Wedding Singer” — may never be standalone hits, but they work well for each scene.

While the first half of the show mirrors the movie, the second act adds scenes and character

GIFT: Page B6

Comfort-food favorite French bread pizza is back

By Bethany Jean Clement
The Seattle Times



Bethany Jean Clement / The Seattle Times / TNS

Don’t wait for a pop-up or until somebody opens a nostalgia-driven French bread pizzeria — make your own, maybe even better than you remember, with bubbly cheese and blackened edges from a few extra minutes under the broiler.

school-and-eat-it-in-front-of-the-TV snack — Stouffer’s if you were lucky, but also easy enough for you to make yourself (sometimes, sigh, substituting English muffins). Hot is a classic American come-home-from-

crispy bread-torpedo — many happy latch-key moments were made of this; just add a glass of cold milk and some reruns.

With just a little extra care, this recipe for French bread pizza will live up to — or even

best — any TV-watching childhood memories.

The method of buttering and toasting the bread to crisp it a bit before saucing/topping is pretty much ubiquitous on the internet, but rather than bothering to melt the butter and brush it on, you can just spread it gently if it’s at room temperature. The amounts here have been left open-ended — if you make extra to freeze (see note), your future binge-watching self will thank you very much.

As Good as You Remember French Bread Pizza

Ingredients:

French bread (fancy or cheap, up to you, but lighter/airier is better)

Butter (room temperature)

Kosher salt and fresh-ground pepper

Pizza sauce (extra credit if you make your own — see recipe)

Pizza toppings of your choice (pepperoni is the Stouffer’s classic)

Shredded whole-milk mozzarella (plus a little fresh mozzarella and/or cheddar if you like)

Grated Parmesan (Reggiano or other good quality)

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees with the rack in the middle to upper-middle part.

Split your bread lengthwise with a good serrated knife, place on a baking sheet cut-side up, spread with butter, and sprinkle lightly with kosher salt and fresh-ground pepper.

Bake about 8 minutes, until the top of the buttered bread has a little crispness to it. Remove from oven and let cool for a few minutes.

OK, you know how to do this! Assemble your F.B.P.s with sauce, one layer of toppings thin enough to absorb cheese-heat and plen-

ty of cheese. (Things to keep in mind: You don’t want to ensoggen [technical term] your bread with sauce, but you do want a nice saucy amount — trust your instinct, and you will find your happy sauce-path. Some say to lay a few toppings down before the sauce for protection of bread-integrity, but that seems like overkill to me, as does, I would like to acknowledge, this entire parenthetical section — onward!)

Bake for another 8-10 minutes or until cheese is melty and bubbling. Then, for more molten cheese/blackened bread-edges, throw on the broiler for a minute or three. (But monitor carefully to prevent wholesale burning!)

Park yourself in front of TV and enjoy.

Note: To freeze French bread pizzas for later: Stick unbaked F.B.P.s in

PIZZA: Page B6



W. Scott Olsen / Special to The Forum

Faculty take pictures of graduates backstage at the Fargodome on Sunday prior to graduation ceremonies for Davies High School.

GRADUATION DAY IN FARGO, MOORHEAD AND WEST FARGO

By Forum staff
Fargo

Eight high schools in Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo held graduation ceremonies Sunday, May 29. Here's a photo from each one we attended.



Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

West Fargo High School graduates cheer toward their families at the start of their graduation ceremony on Sunday.



W. Scott Olsen / Special to The Forum

Students march in the processional at the Moorhead High School graduation ceremony at Minnesota State University Moorhead.



Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

West Fargo Sheyenne High School graduates laugh together while listening to the commencement address during their graduation ceremony on Sunday.



W. Scott Olsen / Special to The Forum

Seniors gather to take a photo with Security Proctor Sherry Fraham before the Fargo South High School graduation ceremony on Sunday at the Fargodome.



W. Scott Olsen / Special to The Forum

Abby Miller, Vivian Behm and Gretchen Krout show off their mortarboard decorations backstage before the Fargo North High School graduation ceremony on Sunday at the Fargodome.



W. Scott Olsen / Special to The Forum

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth addresses family and friends gathered for the Oak Grove High School graduation ceremony in Fargo.



W. Scott Olsen / Special to The Forum

Valedictorian Madison Doeden addresses the crowd at Sunday's high school graduation ceremony at Park Christian School in Moorhead.



RAMPING IT UP:

Girl forages rare wild onion for Fargo chefs, BUSINESS

The Forum

OF FARGO - MOORHEAD

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1 bar, 45 police calls

After chief's report on Windbreak, liquor board to mull law changes

By Barry Amundson
The Forum

FARGO — A police report shows The Windbreak bar in southwest Fargo has had the most calls for officers in the first five months of the year.

Police Chief David Zibolski told the city's Liquor Control Board that The Windbreak alone had 45 calls in that time period, or about 23% of all calls to liquor establishments. The 49 other bars or restaurants that serve liquor had a total of 150 calls.

After The Windbreak, the next highest were the Summit Restaurant & Night Club, formerly the Africa bar and restaurant, with 15 calls and Cowboy Jacks in downtown with 10 calls. Summit, Cowboy Jacks and The Windbreak were the only liquor establishments with calls in double digits.

Zibolski said The Windbreak had 15 liquor license violations, or about a third of all violations. The other 49 liquor establishments had a total of 31 violations.

The large number of calls led Board Chairman Dave Piepkorn, who's also a city commissioner, to ask at last week's meeting if the city attorney and police couldn't work on some type of sanctions or probationary status that could be put on bars with high numbers of calls and violations.

Zibolski said the choice as it currently stands is to meet with bar owners or managers and seek voluntary changes or to revoke a liquor license.

The Windbreak, at 3150 39th St. S., did not respond to The Forum's messages seeking comment for this story.

In the rest of Zibolski's report on bar incidents from Jan. 1 to May 31, he

CALLS: Page A6



Photos by Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Jerome Reinan and Chris Brungardt receive their medals as they cross the finish line of the Great Race on Sunday in downtown Fargo.

FARGO FINISH

Great Race revs up antique car fans as it rolls into downtown

By Tracy Briggs
The Forum

Fargo

The marquee of the Fargo Theatre might have said it best:

"Beep Beep! The Great Race saved the best for last!"

And the estimated 3,000 people who lined Broadway to watch the finish probably agreed.

"I just love old cars and this is the coolest thing that's ever come to Fargo!" said Kari Schlep of West Fargo. She's had friends who have driven in the race.

"I don't know who would think of driving across the country in an old car but I think this is great for Fargo," she said. "The Fargo Theatre — what a great backdrop! I'm just proud to have it here."

Hemming's Motor News Great Race, described by organizers as the world's premiere old car rally, brought the race here, in part, because until last year, they had made it to all



The Great Race, an antique car race that began in Warwick, Rhode Island, brings out a crowd in downtown Fargo on Sunday.

of the contiguous 48 states except Rhode Island and North Dakota.

Problem solved. The 2022 race started in Rhode Island on June 18 and finished here Sunday, June 26.

Competitors in 120 of the world's finest antique automobiles

drove 2,300 miles from Rhode Island to New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota. The first place prize winner receives \$50,000.

Crowds began to form near the finish line at Broadway Square early Sunday morning where

attendees endured gusty winds as they talked cars, checked out the food trucks and enjoyed the music.

Dennis and Sharon Miller of West Fargo took the opportunity to grab a seat on a park bench as they waited to see the cars roll by. Dennis said he loves to

look at the old cars and still remembers his long lost favorite.

"I had a 1963 Super Sport. Everything was beautiful," he said. "But someone ran a stop sign."

"Broadsided it," Sharon added. "He was too young to report it."

But the Millers were getting into the fun Sunday. Dennis even bought a Great Race shirt.

"They switch it up every year so I thought what a great opportunity to get a shirt with my city on it," Dennis said.

Fargo leaders were equally excited to welcome the race to their city. Both Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney and Fargo Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau President Charley Johnson revved up the crowd before the first cars crossed the finish line.

"This is a wonderful thing for Fargo," Johnson said. "We have

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Today's weather



85°
59°

Mostly sunny
Details, B8



SPORTS: RedHawks' 'SuperFan' now gets to enjoy game-day experience with his children.

PAGE B1

Drought's impact on ticks unclear

By Alex Derosier
The Forum

ST. PAUL — Forecasting tick populations is an inexact science, but with last year's severe drought in Minnesota, some public health officials predicted there would be fewer Lyme disease-carrying deer ticks in wooded areas across the state in 2022.

But whether that will be the case still remains unclear as the state enters its peak season for tick activity, which typically begins in May and extends to July. Further muddying the picture? The state's protracted, soggy end to winter may have led to a

sudden surge of deer tick activity when conditions became more favorable, said University of Minnesota public health entomologist Jon Oliver.

"This year, we had a really late spring and I think that sort of pushed all of the adult deer ticks to kind of come out at once," he explained. "So there was a while there where really there were just a ton of adult deer ticks out."

Researchers with the U of M search for ticks by dragging a cloth through the wooded brushy areas where deer ticks typically live, Oliver said. In spring 2021, researchers dragged

TICKS: Page A8



Getty Images

The business end of a blacklegged tick. Formerly called deer ticks, blacklegged ticks are unique in their ability to pick up and transmit debilitating diseases from small mammals like field mice to humans, including Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis and ehrlichiosis. The ticks are now ubiquitous across forested areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin, where disease rates among humans continue to climb.



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Runners start the Sanford Fargo Half Marathon on Saturday on 17th Avenue North, Fargo.

Former Dragons runner Ruebke wins Fargo half-marathon

By Adam Watts
awatts@forumcomm.com

FARGO — Spencer Ruebke's smallest fan pushed him to the biggest win of his running career. The Minnesota State Moorhead graduate and coach of the Ada-Borup-West High School cross country team won the half-marathon race in 1 hour, 10 minutes, 32 seconds at the Sanford Fargo Marathon on Saturday. His wife, Molly, had their son Asher, born in February, out on the course in a stroller to help cheer him on.

"My wife has been my biggest supporter," She's also a runner, but we just had our first child in February, so she hasn't been training as seriously, so she was just kind of cheering for me today. But my baby son was out on the course, too, so that got me fired up seeing him in his stroller."

Ruebke said he needed the motivation to help him keep pushing as he started to slow down in the last three miles. But he built up enough of a lead early in the race to carry him to the victory in a race he led from start to finish.

Ruebke finished more than seven minutes ahead of second-place overall finisher and women's champion Megan Smith, of Denver, who finished in 1:17:46 and more than eight minutes faster than the second-place men's finisher, Brian Wells, of Rochester, Minn. in 1:18:55.

"I led from start to finish. I did not envision that," Ruebke said. "In my mind, I was going to start out a little more relaxed the first four or five miles and work into it, but my fastest miles are my first three. The plan kind of went out the window right away. I had a sense that no one was going to come up and challenge me. So I had to get after it right away."

The former Dragon, now a fifth-grade teacher in the Ada-Borup school district, had Moorhead High School assistant cross country coach Erik Hanson helping to plan his training.

"He's been the guy writing my workouts," Ruebke said. "It's been about 10 weeks in a row, 60 miles a week. I always take a day of rest too, because I'm getting older and had some injuries in the past. It's not like I'm going too heavy mileage compared to other runners. But 60 miles a week and a full-time job keeps me busy."

The top two finishers of the women's half-marathon flip-flopped from the last time they competed in Fargo. Val Curtis, of Minot, N.D., won the Fargo Marathon in 2019 and Smith was second.



Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Spencer Ruebke, 29, finishes first in the Fargo half-marathon with a time of 1:10.32 on Saturday at the Fargodome.



Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Megan Smith, 30, crosses the finish line in first place during the Fargo half-marathon with a time of 1:17.46 on Saturday at the Fargodome.



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Grace Hinds hand out Powerade to runners in the Sanford Fargo Half Marathon on Saturday on Eighth Street South, Fargo.

This time around, Smith got the better of the former champ, crossing the finish several minutes ahead of Curtis, who finished in 1:20:58.

After finishing her race, Smith stayed near the finish line so she could cheer Curtis on. Once Curtis crossed the finish line, Smith was there to congratulate her and welcome her with a hug.

"We both ran the marathon two years ago in 2019. She finished first and I finished second so we just flip-flopped this year," said Smith, originally from Lakeville, Minn., who ran track and cross country at the College of Saint Benedict. "We both ran the Olympic Trials, so we saw each other in Atlanta last year. And then surprise, we both showed up this morning."

Smith was happy that the weather cooperated a little better for her on a sunny Saturday morning. It was a far cry from the cold, windy, rainy weather she faced the last time she ran the Fargo Mar-

athon.

"I wouldn't say it was my favorite race," said Smith, who is training to run a full marathon. "But I got the Olympic Trials time that year. But this year the weather was perfect — perfect for running. So that felt really good."

The runners were thrilled to be back out on the course after the marathon was canceled in 2020 and this year's race was pushed back from May to September.

"I've been working towards this race for a long time," Ruebke said. "It's been two years of training. I thought it was going to be in May, now it's September. It's been a lot of miles on the road in preparation for it. It feels good that that work paid off."

"We all missed a year of racing and even this year has been slow," Smith said. "So it felt good to be out there in a race atmosphere and be able to run again."

Sports reporter Adam Watts can be reached by email at awatts@forumcomm.com

TOP 25 HALF-MARATHON MEN'S RESULTS

1. Spencer Ruebke, Ada, Minn., 1:10.32
2. Brian Wells, Rochester, Minn., 1:18.55
3. Thomas Stromme, Fargo, 1:21.13
4. Steven Hammer, Fargo, 1:22.14
5. Steven Monk, Bismarck, 1:23.24
6. Dillon Waldera, Sioux Falls, S.D., 1:23.38
7. Brandon Lee, West Fargo, 1:23.58
8. Seth Huseby, Minneapolis, 1:24.40
9. Jeremy Kuhn, St. Michael, Minn., 1:24.40
10. Peter Mnastrom, 1:25.07
11. Jacob Berg, Minot, N.D., 1:25.22
12. Michael Allen, White Bear Lake, Minn., 1:25.49
13. Brian Storhaug, Alexandria, Minn., 1:26.02
14. Peter Randall, Austin, Texas, 1:26.04
15. Andrew Lachowitz, Park Rapids, Minn., 1:26.22
16. Derek Johnson, Fargo, 1:26.29
17. Jake Greenstein, West Fargo, 1:26.46
18. Michael Toy, Fargo, 1:27.01
19. Jeremy Latsko, Bexley, Ohio, 1:27.27
20. Michael Orth, Fargo, 1:27.58
21. He Huang, Grand Forks, 1:28.13
22. Tyler Groth, Fargo, 1:28.55
23. Stephen Black, Prior Lake, Minn., 1:29.17
24. Jack Powers, Sisseton, S.D., 1:29.59
25. Michael Waldera, Sioux Falls, S.D., 1:30.04

TOP 25 HALF-MARATHON WOMEN'S RESULTS

1. Megan Smith, Denver, 1:17.46
2. Valeria Curtis, Minot, N.D., 1:20.58
3. Katie Rusch, St. Cloud, Minn., 1:24.10
4. Tara McDonald, Bismarck, 1:24.22
5. Josie Danz, Fargo, 1:24.35
6. Heidi Greenwood, Fargo, 1:25.37
7. Amy Will, Warren, Minn., 1:26.30
8. Brittney Kingsley, Fargo, 1:27.45
9. Danielle Syvrud, Fargo, 1:28.11
10. Katie Johnson, West Fargo, 1:29.54
11. Macy Gress, Dickinson, N.D., 1:33.23
12. Elena Danielson, Fargo, 1:34.11
13. Molly Host, North Mankato, Minn., 1:34.24
14. Roxanne Lorenz, Benson, Minn., 1:35.24
15. Samantha Restemayer, Fargo, 1:35.44
16. Debra Jacques, Appleton, Wis., 1:36.58
17. Carol Winter, Uniontown, Mo., 1:36.58
18. Jennie Berg, Farmington, Minn., 1:37.07
19. Whitney Angelini, Allison Park, Pa., 1:37.23
20. Heidi Merriman, Beresford, S.D., 1:37.31
21. Dexi Maxa, Bigfork, Minn., 1:37.38
22. Chelsey Gloude, Warren, Minn., 1:37.59
23. Barb Murphy, Grand Forks, 1:38.16
24. Kacey Miller, Bismarck, 1:38.28
25. Katy Bonnstetter, Castle Pines, Colo., 1:39.30



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Runners in the Sanford Fargo Marathon run past Prexy's Pond on Saturday at Concordia College, Moorhead

WOMENS

From Page B1

off from running. She questioned if she would ever run again. Her 9-year-old daughter, Maddie, made sure she didn't give up by making her a bracelet that said "don't quit." She wore it meandering the streets of Fargo and Moorhead.

"Six months after the accident, things got really hard, but you know what? I found the help that I needed and sometimes you gotta find the right people to get you through it at the right time," Bock said. "There were times I was never going to run again, didn't know what to do. But family, friends and an amazing therapist to talk to all got me through it and here we are."

There she was, crossing the finish line in 2 hours, 58 minutes, 48 seconds for her first marathon win in nine tries. She had no aspirations of winning it, either, but a combination of perfect running weather and constant encouragement along the way was more than enough.

"I just can't believe it," she said. "The people here are amazing, I couldn't have done it without them. The people get you through it; the friendliest race ever. It's unbeatable here."

Bock finished 3 1/2 minutes ahead of second place Cheryl Jeseritz from Savage, Minn. Haylee Hastad of Fargo was the top local finisher with a fifth-place showing. Former Fargo Shanley, North Dakota State and Minnesota State Moorhead basketball player Sarah Jacobson, who just finished her hoops career last winter, was eighth.

Bock's best time was 2:55 at the Chicago Marathon two years ago. The

TOP 25 FULL MARATHON WOMEN'S RESULTS

1. Heidi Bock, Lincoln, Neb., 2:58.28
2. Cheryl Jeseritz, Savage, Minn., 3:02.00
3. Krista Kuglin, Brainerd, Minn., 3:05.51
4. Samantha Soupir, Omaha, Neb., 3:08.09
5. Lindsay Johnson, Rochester, Minn., 3:11.44
6. Haylee Hastad, Fargo, 3:18.02
7. Megan Sauer, Lismore, Minn., 3:18.31
8. Sarah Jacobson, West Fargo, 3:19.20
9. Melissa Carlson, St. Paul, 3:19.24
10. Amanda McEnroe, Glen Allen, Va., 3:21.16
11. Ashley Kunes, Deerwood, Minn., 3:22.04
12. Rebecca Guenther, San Jose, Calif., 3:22.23
13. Mikayla Fischer, Bowman, N.D., 3:23.03
14. Jennifer Chintala, Geneva, Ill., 3:24.19
15. Halee Peterson, Minneapolis, 3:25.54
16. Hilary Beck, Westwood, Kan., 3:27.15
17. Stacy Koll, New York Mills, Minn., 3:29.19
18. Sarah Kuo, Houston, 3:29.35
19. Solvejg Wastvedt, St. Paul, 3:30.39
20. Anne Harris, Brookings, S.D., 3:30.53
21. Emily Firchau, Cottage Grove, Minn., 3:31.06
22. Katie Triebold, Alexandria, Minn., 3:31.09
23. Crystal Shinosky, Concord Twp, Ohio, 3:31.18
24. Brenda Vaness, Minot, N.D., 3:33.43
25. Mallory Kloucek, Sioux Falls, S.D., 3:33.54

fact she was a bit slower needs to be taken into context; she didn't start running consistently until last April. That's very little time to train for a marathon for a healthy runner, much less somebody coming back from a major injury.

Just getting through five miles, she said, was a chore.

"I barely made it five miles in April," Bock said. "I was here to enjoy myself, smile as much as possible and see what happens."

Readers can reach Forum reporter Jeff Kolpack at (701) 241-5546. Kolpack's Media Blog can be found at www.bisonmedia.com/bison-media-blog and Twitter at [FGSPORTSWRITER](https://twitter.com/FGSPORTSWRITER)



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Runners in the Sanford Fargo Marathon run Saturday cross the Red River into Lindenwood Park, Fargo.



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Cups are filled at a water station for the Sanford Fargo Half Marathon on Saturday on Eighth Street South, Fargo.

MAKING PEOPLE HAPPY:

Moorhead girl earns public art designation for sidewalk rainbow, LIFE

The Forum

OF FARGO-MOORHEAD

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 2022

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Fran and Earl, the married dogs, get adopted and all is right with the world

W Fargo e'll take a break momentarily from the gloom and doom to introduce you to someone who might be just be an



MIKE McFEELY

angel, and she lives right here. Her name is Jenna Jackson, and she loves dogs. She loves all dogs — all animals, actually — but Jenna particularly

adores old dogs, those that don't have much of a chance to be adopted from a shelter because who, after all, would want to take in a dog that you might only get a few months or a year or two with?

Jenna would, and does. She adopts hospice dogs, those that end up in the pound or shelters that are terminally ill or near the end of life. And she gives them a home, love and a dignified end.

"I used to be the intake coordinator for a couple of the rescue organizations, and one time there was an old

DOGS: Page A4



Photos by Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Melisa Siorse Soedo performs with fire on the opening day of the first-ever North Dakota Renaissance Faire on Saturday at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo. The Renaissance Faire continues Sunday and returns next weekend.

Ren Faire off to fiery start



Left: Opal the Fairy makes bubbles for children to enjoy during the opening day of the North Dakota Renaissance Faire on Saturday at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo. **Right:** North Dakota Renaissance Faire attendees shoot targets with a bow and arrow Saturday at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo. **More photos on Page A8.**



Hannah Stonehouse Hudson / StonehousePhoto.com
Jenna Jackson poses with Earl and Fran, a pair of bonded dogs she adopted from the Homeward Animal Shelter.

Fargo School Board's decision garners national attention

By Andrew Haugland
The Forum

FARGO — Since the Fargo School Board rescinded its decision Aug. 9 to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to begin each meeting, Fargo Public Schools (FPS) has received an abundance of attention both locally and nationally.

Individuals from all over the country have voiced their thoughts on the subject as news of the vote spread.

National news outlets such as Fox News, the New York Post, Daily Mail and the Washington Examiner all have stories pertaining to the school board's decision.

Locally, FPS left the Forum a statement Friday, Aug. 12, regarding phone calls they received containing misinformation.

"Some of the feedback is coming from misconceptions of what was decided by the School Board. Tuesday night's decision does not impact classroom or school practices of the Pledge of Allegiance. The motion that was passed is specific to the start of school board regular meetings. Additionally, the decision was not to change the words of the Pledge of Allegiance to remove the words 'Under God.'"

DECISION: Page A8

Record-breaking number of murders reported in Minnesota

By Alex Derosier
The Forum

ST. PAUL — Minnesota reported a record number of murders for a second consecutive year as violent crime continued to surge, a trend seen nationwide and one coinciding with the economic and social disruptions of the coronavirus pandemic.

In its 2021 uniform crime report released Friday, Aug. 12, the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension reported 201 murders, an 8.5% annual increase, and a

21.6% increase in violent crime. The previous murder record was set in 2020, when Minnesota had 185 murders — a 58% increase from the 117 reported in 2019. A 17% increase in violent crime that year accompanied the jump in murders.

Before 2020, Minnesota's highest number of murders was last reported in 1995, when Minneapolis saw a significant surge in violence tied to gangs amid the crack cocaine epidemic.

MURDERS: Page A4



Duluth News Tribune file photo

Law enforcement officers investigate the scene of a shooting in Gilbert.

\$3B grid upgrade would improve its reliability, prevent more blackouts

By Patrick Springer
The Forum

FARGO — North Dakota has ample electricity but has long faced bottlenecks in the transmission grid making it difficult to deliver power to markets to the east and south.

That "trapped" power means lower revenues for North Dakota power generators, especially wind farms that are located in a wide swath of the state — a problem that would be addressed in a massive \$10.4 billion plan to augment regional

transmission systems.

The board of directors for the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, a regional transmission organization commonly called MISO, has approved the plan, described as the nation's largest-ever portfolio of regional transmission projects.

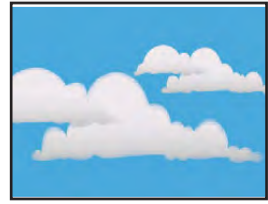
The proposal includes a 345-kilovolt transmission line from Jamestown to Ellendale in North Dakota, as well as a 345-kilovolt line from

BLACKOUTS: Page A8

INSIDE TODAY'S FORUM

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- Weather B8

Today's weather



82°
63°

AM Clouds/ PM Sun
Details, B8

SPORTS:
Moorhead's Gramer reflects on time at Hlinka Gretzky Cup.
PAGE B1

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Photos by Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

People line up to get tickets to enter the first ever North Dakota Renaissance Faire on its opening day Saturday at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo.



North Dakota Renaissance Faire attendees throw javelin Saturday at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo.

BLACKOUTS

From Page A1

Otter Tail Power Company's Big Stone Plant in northeastern South Dakota to Alexandria, Minnesota. That line, in turn, would connect to a proposed line extending north to Minnesota's Iron Range.

The new line to Alexandria and beyond would add a second circuit to a line from Fargo to St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Combined, those projects have a price tag of \$955 million, and MISO said it will benefit electricity consumers by increasing grid capacity and reliability. Proposed transmission projects in MISO's North Grid territory total about \$3 billion.

Julie Fedorchak, chairwoman of the North Dakota Public Service Commission and liaison to MISO, said the transmission projects would benefit North Dakota.

"There's a lot of constraints in North Dakota getting all of our electricity, regardless of source of generation, to markets in the east," she said.

If approved, the Jamestown-to-Ellendale line "will help get our electricity to markets where its wanted and needed," Fedorchak said.

Also, by increasing transmission, the grid will have more resilience and reliability by being able to provide power from more diverse sources. If the wind is blowing in North Dakota but not in Iowa, for example, delivering the North Dakota wind power can make up for the power lag in Iowa, she said.

"Transmission helps because it helps move power more efficiently," helping to avoid blackouts, Fedorchak said.

MISO maps showing the availability and pricing of electricity in real time routinely show that North Dakota has abundant "trapped" electricity that can't be efficiently exported from the state — including the area from Jamestown to Ellendale — resulting in a lower price, she said.

"That's a constant problem in that area," Fedorchak said. The current electricity grid is basically full, mak-

ing it expensive to add new generation sources, since they have to build transmission to add capacity, she said.

Otter Tail Power Company has a substation near the proposed Jamestown-Ellendale line, and therefore might be selected by MISO to lead that project. Otter Tail is one of 10 utilities that joined together as CapX2020 and now are known as Grid North Partners to build new transmission, a group that also includes Xcel Energy.

A joint statement by the Grid North Partners said they support the new MISO transmission plan and "stand ready to develop these projects," which the utility partners said "will provide greater access to renewable energy over a wide geographic area and save costs by locating new transmission lines near or along existing transmission or other infrastructure corridors reducing impacts to landowners by sharing rights-of-way."

Tony Grindberg, Xcel Energy's principal manager in North Dakota, said transmission investments are needed to replace aging infrastructure and to add capacity.

"The demand for energy is going to increase," he said. Much of the new generation capacity will be from renewable sources, such as wind and solar power.

Xcel Energy, for example, has announced plans to be carbon-free by 2050, with a goal of being 80% carbon-free by 2030. Xcel would continue to rely on two nuclear power plants in Minnesota and also would use gas-fired generation while phasing out its fleet of coal-fired power plants.

The MISO transmission plan will require regulatory approval in all states involved, including North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

"It takes many years to go through, but it's anticipating and planning for many years to come," Grindberg said.

If approved, costs of the transmission projects would be paid by ratepayers across the regional MISO footprint, Fedorchak said.

Readers can contact reporter Patrick Springer at 701-241-5522 or pspringer@forumcomm.com.

DECISION

From Page A1

Fargo parents Jake Schmidt and Allie Ollenburger joined the political morning show, "Fox and Friends," and both agreed they believe the district's next step will be to remove the Pledge of Allegiance from classrooms.

"The next logical step in the progression is (they'll) want to remove it from schools because it's a non-inclusionary act which is a bunch of crap," Schmidt said on

the program.

The news has reached a broad array of people across the country, even tickling the strings of OnlySky, a news source tailored to the religiously unaffiliated.

Hemant Mehta, writer for OnlySky, praised board member Seth Holden for his argument as to why the motion should have been rescinded. He added that the Pledge of Allegiance is somewhat of a ruse.

"The Pledge is nothing more than performative patriotism," Mehta wrote. "There's no good

reason for the board to make it an official part of their meetings."

Mehta also commented on the level of professionalism demonstrated by the board, saying they were "civil and respectful."

Christopher Tremoglie, from the Washington Examiner, thinks that the Democratic agenda is at fault for the decision.

"Decades of left-wing brainwashing have convinced educators and administrators they are more compassionate and enlightened than

everyone," he wrote. "They support teaching students to devalue our country's core tenets of liberty, instead brainwashing them to believe in the ideals that comprise diversity, equity and inclusion."

Amid all the attention, FPS is slated to begin its 2022-23 school year Aug. 25.

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Unseasonably warm



Alyssa Goelzer / The Forum

Z Stockwell glides across the ice on one foot while enjoying the warmer weather on Monday at the Broadway Square ice rink.

Biden visits Minnesota today as part of \$1T infrastructure package push

By Dana Ferguson
The Forum

ST. PAUL — President Joe Biden on Tuesday, Nov. 30, is set to stump for the recently approved \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package during a visit to a Twin Cities suburb.

The president is scheduled to discuss the legislation and its expected \$6.8 billion impact on Minnesota during a stop at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount on Tuesday afternoon. It's Biden's most recent stop to tout the plan and his first trip to Minnesota since winning the presidency.

In a news release Monday, the White House said Biden would speak about how the package will create jobs and reduce prices on goods since the vast slate of projects could facilitate a smoother flow of supply chains around the country. The release said Dakota County Technical College "has programs to train the next generation of workers to build, operate, and maintain infrastructure" included in the package.

The federal boost is set to fund more than \$4 billion in improvements to Minnesota highways, \$818 million for public transportation investments and \$302 million to help repair and replace bridges, according to the White House. The plan will also fund broadband expansion, port and airport improve-



Kevin Lamarque / Reuters

President Joe Biden announces the nomination of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell for a second four-year term, and Federal Reserve board member Lael Brainard to serve as vice chair, as Powell stands by Nov. 22 in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building's South Court Auditorium at the White House in Washington.

ments, water quality projects and electric car charging stations in the state.

State transportation officials have said the funds could allow Minnesota to move forward with projects earlier than they'd planned. More than 661 bridges and 4,986 miles of highway in Minnesota are considered to be in poor condition by the White House.

Biden in 2020 won Minnesota with a 7-percentage point advantage over then-President

Donald Trump. But the president's approval rating has sunk as a result of Americans' frustrations about ballooning costs of gas and food, as well as his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

U.S. Rep. Angie Craig, a Democrat who represents the state's 2nd Congressional District, has announced that she'll join the president for the event.

Follow Dana Ferguson on Twitter @bydanaferguson, call 651-290-0707 or email dferguson@forumcomm.com

Judge blocks COVID-19 vaccine rule for health workers in 10 states

By Tom Hals
Reuters

WASHINGTON — A federal judge on Monday, Nov. 29, blocked in 10 states a Biden administration vaccine requirement, finding the agency that issued the rule mandating health care workers get vaccinated against the coronavirus likely exceeded its authority.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Matthew Schelp in St. Louis prevents the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) from enforcing its vaccine mandate for health care workers until the court can hear legal challenges brought by the 10 states.

The ruling is the second legal setback for the Biden administration's requirements aimed at increasing the use of vaccines to halt the COVID-19 pandemic. A federal appeals court in New Orleans earlier this month blocked a sweeping workplace mandate that requires businesses with at least 100 employees to get their staff vaccinated or tested weekly.

Republican state attorneys general sued the administration in early November over the CMS rule, seeking to block the requirement because they alleged it would worsen health care staffing shortages.

Schelp said CMS had significantly understated the burden of its mandate on the ability of health care facilities to provide proper care.

Schelp's ruling applied in the 10 states that brought the case: Missouri, Nebraska, Arkansas, Kansas, Iowa, Wyoming, Alaska, South Dakota, North Dakota and New Hampshire.

On Nov. 4, CMS issued the interim final rule it said covers over 10 million people and applies to around 76,000 health care providers including hospitals, nursing homes and dialysis centers.

Providers that fail to comply with the mandate could lose access to Medicare and Medicaid funds. Medicare serves people 65 and older and the disabled. Medicaid serves the poor.

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Yesterday's poll
Which activity is your tradition
[after the Thanksgiving meal?]

Watch television / movies: 45% Take a nap: 23%
Cards / games with family: 32%

COMING UP ON WDAY TV

Tonight on WDAY
6 News: How the Memory Cafe's new Linger, Laugh & Learn Center is helping those with memory loss and their loved ones make memories.

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SPORTS | BISON MEDIA ZONE | MEN'S SPORTS

Bison's Watson says 'goal is to play' in FCS championship game

NFL receiver prospect has missed NDSU's three playoff games with hamstring injury



North Dakota State's Christian Watson smiles and points in celebration of his touchdown against Northern Iowa in the first quarter of their game on Oct. 9 in the Fargodome.
Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

By [Mike McFeely](#)

January 04, 2022 05:02 PM

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FARGO — North Dakota State wide receiver Christian Watson said Tuesday his goal is to play in the Football Championship Subdivision title game against Montana State.

"My goal is to play on Saturday," Watson told The Forum.

The senior has been sidelined with a hamstring injury suffered in practice the week of Thanksgiving following the Bison's regular-season finale over South Dakota. He has not played in the Bison's three playoff victories over Southern Illinois, East Tennessee State and James Madison.

NDSU plays Montana State for the national championship Saturday at Toyota Stadium in Frisco, Texas.

Watson went through pregame warmups in full pads prior to NDSU's semifinal matchup against James Madison game at the Fargodome on Dec. 17, but spent the game on the sideline in street clothes.

A healthy Watson would be a major factor in the title game against the Bobcats. He is NDSU's leading receiver with 39 catches for 740 yards and seven touchdowns, while also providing a rushing and kick return threat. He leads the Bison with 18 plays of 20 yards or more, including four touchdown receptions of 65 yards or more.

The 6-foot-4, 210-pound receiver caught TD passes of 85, 71, 67 and 65 yards during the regular season.

Watson has accepted an invitation to the East-West Shrine Game in Las Vegas on Feb. 3. Some projections have him as a possible third- or fourth-round pick in April's NFL Draft.

"Right now we're kind of in a holding pattern, which is unfortunate and frustrating at different times," Bison head coach Matt Entz said last week. "We're taking it day by day, and I know that's the conversation I've had, but there's really not any adjustment to this right now."

Watson suffered what is believed to be a Grade 2 hamstring injury in practice during Thanksgiving week. Grade 1 is the mildest hamstring injury and players can usually return to action quickly while Grade 3 is a complete tear of of the muscle that would take months to heal.

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By **Mike McFeely**

Mike McFeely is a columnist for The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead. He began working for The Forum in the 1980s while he was a student studying journalism at Minnesota State University Moorhead. He's been with The Forum full time since 1990, minus a six-year hiatus when he hosted a local radio talk-show.

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