

BRAINERD DISPATCH

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Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

While on a walk along Stony Brook on Sunday, Brynlie Blake explores the clarity of the river ice while peering at her mom. With the mild temperatures, Sarah, Brady and Brynlie Blake were enjoying the outdoors at Fritz Loven Park in Lake Shore.

Pequot Lakes Schools close Monday over safety threats

Classes to resume Tuesday after threats deemed not credible

By Dan Determan
Echo Journal

Classes at Pequot Lakes Schools will resume as planned Tuesday, Dec. 14 — albeit with a two-hour delay — after perceived threats against the district were deemed not to be credible by administrators, the Pequot Lakes Police Department and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The investigation into a student bringing a knife

to the high school parking lot on Friday, Dec. 10, concluded and will be turned over to the Crow Wing County Attorney's Office for further review. Interim Superintendent Kurt Stumpf and Pequot Lakes Police Chief Eric Klang said in a news release that the school district is considering this a serious matter and will apply the district's

THREATS: Page A8

Minnesota hospitals 'overwhelmed' by continued COVID surge

By Alex Derosier
Brainerd Dispatch

ST. PAUL — Leaders of Minnesota hospital systems are pleading with the public to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and to take precautions such as wearing a mask as hospitalizations for the virus remain at record highs for 2021. CEOs of nine Minnesota health systems, including Essentia Health, the Mayo Clinic and Centra Care purchased full-page advertisements in newspapers across the state calling for the public to take the virus more seriously. "We're heartbroken. We're overwhelmed" the full-page ad begins. "Our emergency departments are overfilled, and we have patients in every bed in our hospitals." In a statement on the worsening situation, the CEOs said health care is in one of the toughest positions it has been in since COVID-19 arrived in Minnesota.

"Doctors, nurses and people working in health care are doing everything they can to support the health of all Minnesotans," the statement said. "And yet, every day our health care workers see avoidable illness and death as a direct result of COVID-19. Health systems have risen to every challenge put before them, but they are overwhelmed and cannot continue to carry this burden." Hospitalizations in the state reached 1,677 on Dec. 10, according to numbers released Monday, Dec. 13, by the Minnesota Department of Health. Nearly 99% of the state's 1,012 adult intensive care unit beds were full, with 342 of those beds occupied by a person sick with COVID-19.

Meanwhile, Minnesota late last week confirmed its second case of the omicron variant of the coronavirus. The person

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Brainerd mother gets probation in crash that killed toddler son

By Tom Olsen
Duluth News Tribune

CARLTON, Minn. — Misty Louise Mattinas was highly intoxicated, traveling more than twice the speed limit and distracted by the GPS on her phone when she veered off the road and struck a tree that split her car in half in November 2020 in Cloquet, Minnesota.

As a result, the Brainerd woman will forever live with the fact that she was responsible for the death of her own 3-year-old son, Dennis Solis.

A year later, Mattinas now watches her other child, Mia, play alone without her best friend at her side. The 27-year-old told a judge she still gets nightmares, cold sweats and anxiety most nights. And having recently learned that she's pregnant with a child due in July, Mattinas said she feels "shameful." "I don't feel like I deserve another baby," she told Judge Rebekka Stumme on Thursday, Dec. 9.



Duluth News Tribune file photo
From left, Mia Solis, 6, Salina Mattinas and Misty Mattinas sing during a gathering remembering lost relatives on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day on May 5 in Duluth.

Mattinas has a powerful story, Stumme said, and a key part of her sentence will involve sharing it with fellow impaired driving offenders, treatment groups and area schools.

The judge granted Mattinas a departure from state sentencing

guidelines, staying a 57-month prison term in favor of seven years of supervised probation after her plea in October to a felony count of criminal vehicular homicide.

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Chauvin to change plea in civil rights case

By Andy Mannix
Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS — Former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin plans to change his not-guilty plea on federal charges that he abused his position of power to violate the civil rights of George Floyd, according to a new court filing Monday.

A grand jury indicted Chauvin — along with former officers J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao — earlier this year on charges of using the "color of the law" to deprive Floyd of his constitutional rights to be free from the use of unreasonable force.

Chauvin pinned down Floyd with a knee on his neck for more than nine minutes, and the



Pool via Reuters
Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin addresses his sentencing hearing and the judge as he awaits his sentence June 25 after being convicted of murder in the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

other three did nothing to stop him, the charges resulted in bodily injury to, and the death of George Floyd." All four pleaded not

guilty to those charges in September. On Monday, the court published a notice that Chauvin will appear at 9 a.m. Wednesday to enter a new plea. His attorney,

Eric Nelson, didn't immediately respond to a call for comment.

In April, Chauvin was convicted of second and third-degree murder and manslaughter in state court. If he pleads guilty to the federal charge, Chauvin could avoid another emotionally charged and highly publicized trial. The other three officers are not scheduled to appear alongside Chauvin at the hearing, meaning they are likely to go forward to a trial, which is on track to begin early next year in St. Paul.

In June, as a state judge sentenced him to 22 1/2 years in prison, Chauvin said he planned to reveal information that he couldn't talk

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