



Chippewa County defendant refuses to attend trial, ordered to prison. **A3.**

Twins rock Rockies. B1.

WILLMAR, MINN.

MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022

WCTTRIB.COM



Donna Middleton / West Central Tribune

Willmar Fests crowns 2023 Queen of Festivals Lleyten Rein (green dress), International Princess Crisstill Duaso (pink dress) and Aqua Princess Leah Smith (blue dress).

Gov. Walz signs order protecting abortion services

Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — Gov. Tim Walz on Saturday, June 25, signed an emergency executive action to protect reproductive health care services in Minnesota, for residents and those from other states seeking care here. Walz signed Emergency Executive Order 22-16, entitled “Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care Services in Minnesota,” early Saturday. Under the Minnesota Constitution, abortion remains legal in Minnesota, but Minnesota’s neighboring states are expected to severely restrict abortion following the U.S. Supreme Court’s overturning of the 1973 landmark case, Roe vs Wade, which ensured a woman’s constitutional right to abortion and legalized it nationwide. By erasing abortion as a constitutional right, the ruling restored the ability of states to ban it. Twenty-six states are either certain or considered likely to ban abortion. The Supreme Court’s decision triggered laws in Minnesota’s neighbors to the west — North Dakota and South Dakota — that ban abortions in those states. South Dakota’s ban goes into effect immediately, and North Dakota’s will go into effect in one month. In a 1995 case, the Minnesota’s Supreme Court, upheld the right to an abortion under the state’s constitution, so the U.S Supreme Court’s decision wouldn’t affect the state’s restrictions. But Minnesota clinics could now see an influx of people from neighboring states coming across the border for abortion services. The executive action by Walz was issued in part to help protect residents of those 26 states from being penalized for traveling to Minnesota to seek care. The order states: “To the maximum extent permitted under the United States and Minnesota Constitutions and Minnesota law, the Governor will decline to honor requests to extradite individuals who are accused of committing acts related to reproductive health care that are not criminal offenses in Minnesota.”

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THAT’S A WRAP

Saturday events signal end of this year’s Willmar Fests

By Linda Vanderwerf and Donna Middleton
West Central Tribune

Willmar Fests wrapped its 2022 edition with a series of events Saturday, including coronation, Grande Day Parade, Little Crow Ski Team Show and fireworks.



Linda Vanderwerf / West Central Tribune



Above right: Students of the Just for Kix dance school in Willmar perform Saturday during the Grande Day Parade at Willmar Fests. **Bottom left:** Families pack the route of the Grande Day Parade on Saturday at Willmar Fests. **Bottom right:** Flag bearers with the KMS Marching Saints of Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg Public Schools dance Saturday during the band’s 2022 show, “Illusion,” featuring the music of Styx, during the Grande Day Parade at Willmar Fests.



U of M working on ‘Roomba for a pasture’

By Jeff Beach
Agweek

MORRIS, Minn. — Cows don’t like to eat thistles. Farmers don’t want to let thistles take over a pasture.

A new possible solution to the problem is the “Cowbot,” a weed-mowing vehicle that can operate without a driver.

“It’s kind of like a Roomba for a pasture, except a smart one,” said Eric Buchanan, a renewable energy scientist at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, Minnesota.

Buchanan and others with the University of Minnesota are thinking futuristically about farm management, like a robot that can mechanically weed rows of corn.

“We’re also looking at possibilities of using drones in

addition with ground vehicles like the Cowbot to actually herd the cows,” Buchanan said.

Modified Toro

For the Cowbot, the researchers have partnered with Toro, a Minnesota company with a long history of making lawnmowers.

A Toro diesel golf course mower was converted to electric and the mower blade changed to a flail mower. A flail mower has flails or blades attached to a rotating drum or axle.

The flail mower “can mow a little more aggressively and would be better for thistles and bigger weeds,” Buchanan said.

It also is less likely to throw out material from beneath the mower.

A trailer for the mower also has been equipped with solar panels to recharge the electric vehicle.

This version of the Cowbot still requires some human help to get started. Parikshit Maini, a post-doctoral researcher with the University of Minnesota, said the Cowbot is driven manually around the perimeter of a pasture to be mowed, establishing a boundary for the GPS steering.

Then the Cowbot can map out a plan for the most efficient way to mow the area. Unlike a Roomba in a living room, a pasture-mowing robot has to account for things like slope and obstacles and how thick the weeds are.

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Contributed / West Central Research and Outreach Center

Thistles, like those seen in the foreground, are a problem in pastures. The Cowbot mower is a possible solution.