County makes major moves at regional landfill
Clean-up of PFAS contaminant is biggest environmental initiative

LUC BLOOMFORD FOR MESABI TRIBUNE

Out of sight, out of mind. At least until what landfillers are in the minds of many.
But not so at the St. Louis County Regional Landfill in Virginia. St. Louis County officials are taking major steps to improve the environment, including investing up to $10 million to address a contaminant of concern that’s become a major issue at landfills across the nation.
The St. Louis County landfill operation is a model for the rest of the industry. St. Louis County Commissioner Keith Nelson, chair of the county’s solid waste committee said, “We’re doing everything we can to protect our environment.”

The county’s biggest environmental initiative currently underway at the landfill is the treatment of Per-and-Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). PFAS are a group of manufactured chemicals used since the 1940s in a variety of clothing, food packaging, household products, and fire retardants.

PFAS have been used as a stain and water resistant product for clothing, furniture, non-stick cooking utensils, in cleaning equipment, as a liner in microwave popcorn cooking bags, and in other products for decades. In 2021, St. Louis County interim Environmental Services director said: “The PFAS breaks down very slowly and over time can build up in people, animals and the environment.”

PFAS has now been shown to cause health problems in people exposed to certain levels of the substances. Reproductive effects, developmental effects or delays in development, cardiovascular disease, obesity, learning disabilities, birth complications, and cancer have been linked to PFAS.

New laws effective Jan. 1, 2022

STAFF REPORT

The following is a list of select new laws passed during the 2021 regular and special legislative sessions that take effect Jan. 1, 2022. The list is not all-encompassing; follow the bill number denoted language that became law.

Summaries of all laws passed by the 2021 Legislature in both the 2021 regular and special sessions are available online from nonpartisan organizations. In an interview at Kun- nar’s Restaurant, where he is a frequent visitor, he recited the poem “Sea Fever” by John Masefield.

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And all I ask is a tall ship and far wide ocean to set me thinking
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Bill Ewens celebrates 100 years with health and humor

LINDA TYSSON MESABI TRIBUNE

VIRGINIA — Bill Ewens laughs heartily about reaching a milestone birthday, but turns serious when imparting this advice: “Drink in all there is to learn, all there is to see. En- joy people, talk to people. Read. Life can be exciting.”

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Bill Ewens, who turns 100 on Monday, Jan. 3, is pictured during an interview at Kunnar’s Restaurant, where he is a frequent customer.

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