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COVID-19 vaccinations top 2 million mark in Minnesota

by Dean Morrill
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The number of COVID-19 vaccinations surpassed the 2 million mark in Minnesota last week.

While it took more than two months for the state to administer the first million doses, it took less than one month to administer the second million doses. Minnesota has been able to increase vaccination rates as supply has increased from the federal government and Gov. Tim Walz continues to expand capacity in the state's vaccine distribution network.

Governor Walz announced that Minnesota is a national leader in getting vaccines into arms and continues to rank in the top 10 among states for the percentage of doses received that have been administered.

"Hope is on the horizon as more than two million doses of life-saving vaccines have gone into the arms of our loved ones in Minnesota," the governor said. "With our strong network of hard-working providers and Minnesotans doing their part to end this pandemic by rolling up their sleeves when it's their turn, we are proud of our state for working together and leading the nation in vaccine administration. We look forward to celebrating these remarkable milestones at an increasing pace this spring as vaccine supply continues to grow."

As of Thursday's vaccine report, 1,303,210 Minnesotans have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and 764,275 Minnesotans are fully vaccinated. Nearly 77 percent of adults 65 years of age and older have received at least one

dose.

Governor Walz has taken several steps to increase the pace of vaccination in Minnesota. In addition to the state's expansive network of providers and pharmacies, Minnesota has created several Community Vaccination sites to increase capacity, including a new site launched this week in St. Cloud. Governor Walz also signed a bill into law this month authorizing qualified dentists to administer coronavirus vaccinations to help prepare for increased vaccine supply.

Weeks ahead of schedule, Minnesota hit its goal of vaccinating 70 percent of people age 65+ and Governor Walz expanded eligibility to 1.8 million more people last week, allowing even more Minnesotans who need the vaccine to receive it. Minnesota's vaccine distribution

network stands ready to continue scaling up and increasing vaccination rates as supply continues to increase in the coming weeks.

As Minnesota reports more than two million vaccine doses administered, the state will also report more than 500,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19. "While we are closer than ever to ending the pandemic and returning to our daily lives, we are not out of the woods yet," Walz said.

In a report sent out by Cass County Public Health Monday afternoon, the number of cases over a two-week period sits at 41, with the case rate at 14.13.

Minnesota's death rate sits at 6,782 with Cass County jumping up two to 26. The total number of positive cases in Cass County rose to 2,185.

The number of deaths in Hubbard County is 41, with the most recent death falling between the age of 19-29. The number of cases is 1,552. The 14-day case rate dropped significantly to 4.59.

Beltrami has 3,146 cases and 54 deaths, Crow Wing County has 5,217 cases and 85 deaths, and Itasca County has 3,237 cases and 51 deaths.

The total number of COVID-19 cases in Minnesota is 506,376 with 489,279 no longer isolated. There were seven confirmed deaths reported in the state last Wednesday, six Thursday, nine Friday, six Saturday, five Sunday and zero Monday.

Minnesotans are encouraged to following public health guidance by wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, frequently washing hands, and staying home when sick.

Around the Corner: a look at businesses in Walker

Leech Lake Lumber is three generations strong

by Chris Haugene
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Leech Lake Lumber started organically back in the 1950s when founder Ole Berg purchased the property where the business is now located. A logger by trade back in the 1930s, Ole used his machinist skills after World War II to build a homemade sawmill that was powered by a steam-engine tractor. For many decades, that sawmill produced the lumber that went into Leech Lake homes, cabins and businesses.

Ole's son Carl, the current owner, started working at the sawmill in the early 1960s, selling lumber to retailers. Eventually the Bergs sold the sawmill and logging equipment and focused on retail sales as demand grew from

rough-cut logs for docks and resorts to refined materials for stick-built homes.

The business was growing nicely when tragedy struck in June 1976 when a fire burned through the main office. But with customers in need and some gritty perseverance, they re-opened the day after the fire. The Bergs and their staff set up an old card table and used a tackle box as a cash register to keep the shop running. Ole eventually sold the business to his son Carl to take it into the future.

In the early 1980s Carl expanded the business, opening Cass Lake Building Center just 20 minutes north of Walker. The Cass Lake Building Center was sold January 2019.

In the late 1970s the lumber yard became a third generation undertaking when Carl's



The Leech Lake Lumber staff includes (from left) Trey Kelley, Kim Krueger, Chuck Smith, owner Carl Berg, Bill Stading and Jon Berg. Photo by Dean Morrill

son Jon started working while still in high school. Carl's daughter Kim then joined the family business in the summer of 1980 while still in college.

As the years advanced, so did construction methods. Customized homes and engineer-built trusses were being utilized and soon became the norm, instead of hand-framed rafters and floors.

Back in the day customers would come in with rough drawings, pictures from magazines and newspapers clippings with ideas for how they wanted their new home to look. The staff would then work with the customers to make their vision a reality.

Today Leech Lake Lumber offers computer aided design

as well as a stocked showroom where customers have the opportunity to look at and examine the products they could potentially buy for their building or remodeling project. Special order products can be easily obtained; Leech Lake Lumber is a True Value affiliate as product quality is very important to the business.

Personalized customer service is an important concern at Leech Lake Lumber, as each individual who walks

in — whether they are a contractor, someone building a new shed or tackling a do it yourself project — is a customer that Leech Lake Lumber wants to help.

Leech Lake Lumber continues to be a community minded lumberyard. They are Hometown Proud!

They know anyone can sell lumber; but they sell service.

Leech Lake Lumber can be reached at (218) 547-1671. They are located just south of the Walker Airport.

Minnesota FoodShare Month marks 40th anniversary

The 40th anniversary of the Minnesota FoodShare Campaign will run from March 1 through April 11 and the Walker Food Shelf is currently raising funds to participate in this statewide effort.

As the largest grassroots fundraiser and food drive in the state, this annual March campaign brings together various community organizations, businesses, and faith communities to help stock nearly 300 food shelves throughout Minnesota.

In 2020, over 3.8 million visits were made to Minnesota food shelves and 9 percent of Minnesotans had income levels below poverty. This included 11 percent of Minnesota's children. Consequently, food shelves, food banks and meal programs are currently running at capacity in order to maintain an equitable statewide food system.

This is the only statewide effort that ensures every donated dollar goes directly to food shelves to purchase food for those in need. And now, more than ever, the collection and distribution of food is vital for many in the community.

Super One Foods in Walker is helping with local fundraising by preparing food bags that are sold to shoppers for \$10, and then donated to the Walker Food Shelf. These bags supplement the supply of non-perishable items that are included in weekly prepacked food boxes.

The food shelf distributes those food boxes from noon to 3 p.m. every first, second, third and fifth Tuesday of the month and 4 to 7 p.m. every fifth Tuesday of the month.

Individual financial donations will also contribute to the success of the March campaign and can be made easily through:

- Any local church
- Facebook.com/WalkerAreaFoodShelf using Paypal or debit/credit card
- WalkerFoodShelf.com using Paypal or debit/credit card
- US Mail - P.O. Box 1101, Walker, MN 56484 (no cash, please)
- In person (no cash, please) at 8243 Industrial Rd. NW, Walker, MN on each Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Use doorbell at rear entrance.

Follow www.Facebook.com/WalkerAreaFoodShelf for important information regarding Walker Food Shelf and their continued efforts to serve the Walker community.

Walker Talkers compete at Blackduck, NSDA Nationals

by Ben Offerman
WHA Speech coach

The Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Speech team competed in two tournaments last weekend.

Three speakers entered videos in the NSDA Northern Lights qualifying tournament, and four speakers competed in Blackduck. Overall, the team earned two awards at

Blackduck and advanced one speaker to the NSDA National Tournament.

Saturday, four speakers competed at the Blackduck Invitational Tournament. Elijah Cox competed in the category of Prose, Natalie Resch-Seely in Discussion, Ada Muller ad-

Walker Talkers

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Time's a wastin! Get those guesses in for Leech Lake Ice-Out Contest

by Gail DeBoer
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This will be the penultimate article for the 2021 Leech Lake Ice-Out Contest. Penultimate (adj.): next to the last

in a series.

By extension, that means the last article March 31 will be ... The Ultimate!

Now you may think "ultimate" means the best, the most extreme. It does. But it also can mean "the last in a series."

Congratulations — you've just increased your vocabulary. Now you can amaze your friends! Impress your employer! Confound your enemies!

(Do you get this feeling you're dealing with someone who once thought she was destined to be an English teacher?)

Moving on. Just like the sap that's been dripping, then flowing from maple trees this month, the Ice-Out entries have been arriving at The P-I office. First a few a day; then a dozen or so.

Then as days got sunnier and warmer, the drips became a stream of entries coming from across the state, throughout the Midwest and from the wintering grounds of migratory Snowbirds.

So for the penultimate time, here's how to enter the contest:

Send ice out date; name; mailing address; email address; phone number.

Submit guesses by snail mail, email, fax or deliver to our office before 11:59 p.m. April 1.

Snail mail: Pilot-Independent, PO Box 190, Walker, MN 56484

Office location: P-I, 408 Minnesota Ave., Walker

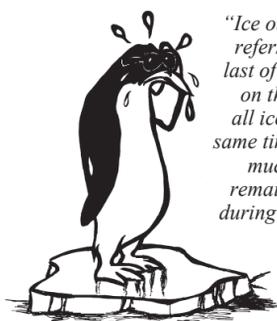
Emails: dmorrill@pilotindependent.com or gdeboer@pilotindependent.com

Fax: (218) 547-3000

Eight more days

Ice-Out date for 2021? What's your guess?

2020	April 29	2003	April 24	1986	April 18	1969	April 26
2019	May 2	2002	April 23	1985	April 27	1968	April 20
2018	May 9	2001	May 1	1984	April 24	1967	April 19
2017	April 14	2000	April 17	1983	April 25	1966	May 12
2016	April 17	1999	April 25	1982	May 3	1965	May 4
2015	April 14	1998	April 13	1981	April 15	1964	May 2
2014	May 8	1997	April 28	1980	April 30	1963	April 18
2013	May 15	1996	May 14	1979	May 12	1962	May 5
2012	April 2	1995	May 2	1978	May 3	1961	May 4
2011	May 1	1994	April 24	1977	April 27	1960	May 1
2010	April 6	1993	April 26	1976	April 15	1959	April 28
2009	April 30	1992	April 28	1975	May 10	1958	April 17
2008	May 13	1991	April 25	1974	May 1	1957	May 1
2007	April 25	1990	April 26	1973	April 15	1956	May 8
2006	April 19	1989	May 4	1972	May 8	1955	April 19
2005	April 18	1988	April 29	1971	April 29	1954	April 23
2004	April 25	1987	April 15	1970	May 5	1953	April 28
						1952	April 26
						1951	May 2
						1950	May 23
						1949	April 21
						1948	April 25
						1947	May 4
						1946	April 14
						1945	April 9
						1944	May 3
						1943	April 25
						1942	April 24
						1941	April 20
						1940	May 5
						1939	May 2
						1938	April 18
						1937	May 3
						1936	May 1



"Ice out" on a lake refers to when the last of the ice melts on that lake. Not all ice melts at the same time, therefore much of the lake remains navigable during this process.

Earliest day out • April 2, 2012
Latest day out • May 23, 1950