



75 Cents

Subscribe today! Call (218) 739-7015 or (800) 726-1781.



# The Daily Journal

www.fergusfallsjournal.com

Tuesday

August 27, 2013

Vol. 140, No. 202

Fergus Falls, Minn.

## Murder suspects fight extradition

### Burriss father and son duo in jail in Arizona

By Heather Rule  
Daily Journal

The father and son arrested for the murder of Scott Burriss, who died from a single gunshot wound last year, decided to fight extradition during a hearing Aug. 23 in Maricopa County Superior Court.

Michael Alan Burriss, 64,

and Michael Kyle Burriss, 23, both formerly of Fergus Falls, were arrested Aug. 12 in Mesa, Ariz. by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. They've each been charged with one felony count of second-degree murder. The charge carries a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison. They remain in the Maricopa County Jail.

It's always the defendant's choice to waive extradition, and 99 percent of the time, people choose to waive extradition, according to Assistant Otter Tail County Attorney Michelle Eldien. "They're not waiving," Eldien said of the Burriss murder suspects. "It really doesn't happen very often.



M.A. Burriss

It's not something we do every day."

The next step is getting the governor's offices involved in both Minnesota and Arizona in order to issue a Governor's Warrant to bring Michael Alan Burriss and Michael Kyle Burriss back to Minnesota to face the murder charges.

See **Burriss** — Page 3



M.K. Burriss

### 19-year-old gets 24 months for murder conspiracy plot

By Heather Rule  
Daily Journal

One of the people involved in a murder conspiracy plot from last October in Pelican Rapids was sentenced to 24 months in prison Monday, Aug. 26 in Otter Tail County District Court.

Brandtley Patrick Hut-

son, 19, of Dilworth, was sentenced in Otter Tail County District Court for felony first-degree aggravated robbery. He pleaded guilty June 24. In exchange for the plea, an additional felony charge of first-degree conspiracy to commit assault was dismissed. See **Plot** — Page 3

### ON THE ROAD: PELICAN RAPIDS

## Trail project moving forward

### One proposed path would link Pelican Rapids, Perham

By Chris Reinos  
The Daily Journal

The city councils of Perham and Pelican Rapids are exploring the idea of a biking trail between the two cities that winds its way through Maplewood State Park.

The two councils, along with partners including the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners, are financing a trail feasibility study. Each city will be contributing \$13,181 to the study, which will cost \$66,000 in total.

"We see it as a huge economic impact for our region," Pelican Rapids City Administrator Don Solga said. "This helps Otter Tail County in those realms of tourism and hospitality."

The project began when Pelican Rapids was looking to build a trail to Maplewood State Park and a separate trail connecting the city to a subdivision west of town. Through County Commissioner Doug Huebsch, Solga eventually got in contact with Perham Economic Development Agency Director Chuck Johnson. Johnson



Solga

then crafted an application for state bonding money the day before the June 21 deadline.

Solga and Johnson have taken the trail idea to their respective city councils and have received nothing but support. Solga said once the feasibility study begins, it should take around six months to complete, after which it will be determined if the project can go forward.

"Several meetings have taken place, and the sense of the best way to approach this was to have a master plan in place," Johnson said.

There was an attempt in Pelican Rapids a decade ago to build a trail, but the plan failed. Solga said that was due in part to not consulting with landowners whose private property would have to be used for such a project. This time around, Solga said the city will include these landowners more extensively in the discussion.

"We would hope that activities would take place to talk to every one of the landowners as part of the feasibility study," Solga said. "So when we get down to a trail, aside from the cities and the county, the state and the DNR all being on board, so will the landowners."

Johnson said there are factors working in the

See **Trail** — Page 3



Zach Stich/Daily Journal

The Hillcrest Comets work conditioning at 7 a.m. this morning. Fall athletics have worked around the extreme heat that the last few days have brought to the area.

## Feeling the heat

### Football team, others battling blazing temperatures

By Chris Reinos  
The Daily Journal

After a relatively cool summer, a heat wave has struck Fergus Falls and much of the Midwest. With temperatures soaring into the 90s and expected to remain there most of this week, lots of people are feeling the effects.

Hillcrest Lutheran Academy's football team has decided to avoid the heat by practicing in the morning. Head Coach Charlie Brue likes the cooler morning practices, but with school starting, practices have to be focused and sharp.

"Heat does cause some stress," Brue said. "We are going to school

now and the heat just compounds the amount of stress these kids feel. It's been a tough week, but we just have to get through it to our game on Friday."

Fergus Falls varsity football coach Steve Olson said he is limiting practices because many of his coaches are teachers who have returned to work during the day. Later afternoon practices have not been a possibility, so the team has been practicing from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Olson said it can be difficult to keep players focused during scorching days, but it is something the program has to work through. "We have to find the right

balance between keeping them motivated and getting our work done," Olson said.

The team will have its first game Aug. 30, which is expected to be another extremely hot day. Olson said the team has done some practice work without pads and there is also a lot of water available to the players each day.

Ryan Pickering, the lead athletic trainer at Lake Region Healthcare, said being careful with exercising in this weather extends beyond the football field and covers anyone working hard in the heat.

"The big thing is to make sure

See **Heat** — Page 3

## Fergus students behind state test averages

The Daily Journal

ST. PAUL — Minnesota's students saw a slight setback in standardized test scores in math in 2013, made small gains in science and struggled with a new reading test.

Fergus Falls district students fell below the state average in each of the three test categories. 60.2 percent of Minnesota students were proficient or better in math, while the district number was 55.5 percent. 57.6 percent of state students

were proficient or better in reading and 52.4 percent of were proficient or better in science. 56.6 percent of Fergus Falls students were proficient or better in reading and 49.5 percent were proficient or better in science.

The state used a new reading test this year, which the Department of Education said was more rigorous than its predecessor.

On reading tests, just a little more than half of third- through eighth-grade students and 10th-graders

met or exceeded state expectations.

The Department of Education attributed that to the new reading test implemented statewide in 2013, which the agency said was more rigorous than its predecessor.

Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius described the new reading standards as "more challenging," and the department said the scores reflect that.

"Anytime a new test based on new standards

is given, a drop in scores is to be expected," Cassellius said. But she said toughening academic expectations was the best way Minnesota can help prepare its students for the challenges of a changing economy.

Of the seven grade levels to take the reading test, the percentage of students that met or exceeded expectations fell in a range between 54 percent (fourth-, seventh- and eighth-graders) to 64 percent (fifth-graders).

### Hail falls during storm



Photo provided

A unique hail formation fell Monday during severe storms in the north-eastern half of the county. Tornado warnings were also issued.

MAILING LABEL

**TOMORROW:**

**HIGH:** 91 **LOW:** 71

**SUNRISE TOMORROW:** 6:40 am  
**SUNSET TOMORROW:** 8:10 pm

**YESTERDAY:**

**HIGH:** 91 **LOW:** 75  
**PRECIPITATION:** .0

**INDEX**

Comics ..... 4  
Forecasts ..... 2  
Lottery ..... 2  
Markets ..... 3  
Sports ..... 8  
Want ads ..... 5-6

**OBITUARIES**

In today's Journal, **Page 2**

- Raymond Biersdorf, 79, Fergus Falls
- Troy Dunn, 50, New York Mills
- Alice Grieger, 86, New York Mills
- Christian Muir, 49, Fergus Falls

**SAVE THE DATE! SAT., SEPT 21**

**IN GOOD COMPANY**

**2ND ANNUAL WOMEN'S EXPO**

Fergus Falls Community Arena

Lake Region HEALTHCARE  
Vision. Integrity. Award winning care.

Women's Expo  
IGC