

Drivers Safety Course May 9 in Fergus

For The Journal

A four hour AARP Drivers Safety course will be held from 5 to 9 p.m. Thursday, May 9 at Nelson Auto Center, next to Target

and across from McDonald's. This refresher course is open to the public and certificates will be given and will continue your 10 percent car insurance discount.

Class size is limited so sign up early. The fee is \$12 for AARP members and \$14 for others. To register call Kathy at 218-998-8878 or 800-477-3013.



Rian Bosse/Daily Journal

Docks and boat lifts sit on the shore at Vacationland Resort on Otter Tail Lake. Owner Trevor Johnson said he had the docks in the water this time last year.

Late spring: Golf course professionals hope snow will melt for early May open

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year, I have no idea," owner Trevor Johnson said. "Right now, we can't do anything. No yard work, nothing. There are three cabins I can't get in to."

The trouble for most resort owners who rely on the fishing opener, this year on May 11, to kick start their business is that cold weather has kept them from preparing for the busy start. For Johnson, that has been a near impossibility. Anglers, however, are coming, no matter what.

"I don't know if business will be affected. People who are coming for opener will anyway, even if they have to fish some of the smaller lakes," Johnson said. "There will just be some things that aren't done by that time."

Many of those coming to the lake this spring will also be looking to play golf. John Young, golf director at Balmoral golf

course, said this year some members are delaying their return to the area by a week or two.

Despite having less time to prepare the course, Young is sure they will be ready, though it might take some time for it to return to its usual form.

"It takes a couple weeks for the grass to get growing and for to get the irrigation on," Young said. "Usually we like to have the course green by May 1. This year we're hoping for around Memorial Day."

For Young, strange weather is part of doing business. While years like this are rare, the chances of a long winter have kept them prepared.

"This year will be the latest the course has ever opened in 50 plus years and last year it was the earliest," Young said with a laugh. "It's part of living in Minnesota. It just so happens we've gotten both

extremes in two years." Pebble Lake Golf Course professional Ryan Tungseth said while the delayed opening has certainly hurt — about 1,800 rounds were played between March 18 through April 15 — about 1,600 of those rounds were played by members. During the summer months, only about 50 percent of the rounds are member rounds.

"The fact that members have lost rounds certainly hurts," Tungseth said. "But we're still dependent on having a nice June and July without rain. Those are the dealbreakers."

Tungseth also said last year's opening was an exception, and that the course opening will only likely be a couple weeks behind the average opening date of April 16.

Still, Tungseth said, "if it stretches into May, then you start worrying about membership."

Volunteers: Response time about 3 minutes

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get that truck out the door when we have people living here," said Fire Chief Mark Hovland. "Just by having somebody in the building is a comfort to me."

Their average response time is three minutes, Hovland said.

For Hoyer, he's building a house in a year or two, so he was looking to save some money before he moved in. The experience was a plus, too.

"Getting out on the truck right away," Hoyer said. "Every time you're on a truck, you learn something new."

Sometimes firefighters that live at the station for a year will end up with more experience than firefighters who have been at the job for five years, Bach said.

"You're right at the station," Demmer said. "It's a great learning experience."

Berg moved in as soon as he joined the department, so he's much closer now than when he was living out in the country. He

agreed that it's a good experience.

"So you can see everything firsthand," Berg said.

Not only have they developed a good sense of camaraderie with each other, but hanging around the firehouse has given them a chance to meet a lot of the other firefighters as well. It's an opportunity to talk with some of the experienced ones and learn new things about the job.

"They're very good about taking you under their wing," Berg said.

The group of four paid on-call firefighters aren't just hanging around the house 24-7 waiting for a call, however. They all have jobs in town and a couple of them go to school as well. But, the back of the fire station is where they always end up.

"We live here," Demmer said. "This is home."

They all have their own rooms, and there's a kitchen and living area as well — just like you'd find in any other living quarters.

They have a weekly rotation for cleaning the kitchen and bathroom, and it stays clean.

"If it got out of hand, Chief would be back here," Bach said.

Their living quarters also become a public area when tours come through the department.

It's also a benefit for members of the community to have the four guys around the firehouse. They're able to answer phone calls that come in and can help with items that don't take the entire department, like resetting fire alarms, or questions about burn permits or fire extinguishers.

The firehouse culture for these guys means they live as a family but work together as a team, Hovland said. He also said that as the landlord, he hasn't had any tenant problems.

"This has actually been a pretty good group," Hovland said. "They've bonded really well. They've come a long way in a short period of time."

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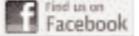
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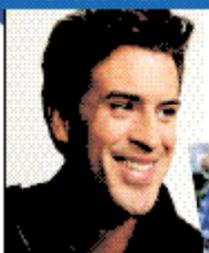
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