



VIKINGS SHINE IN PRIME TIME

Defense smothers Giants as perfect start is extended to 4-0



SPORTS

TUESDAY
October 4, 2016

StarTribune

73° 57°
Nothing lasts forever...
big chill on the way. B6

Striking nurses reject contract

"No" vote on offer will send 4,800 caregivers at five Allina hospitals back to the picket lines.

By JEREMY OLSON
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Allina Health hospital nurses voted Monday night to reject a contract offer from their employer, increasing the likelihood that their walkout over health benefits, staffing and safety concerns will go down as the longest nursing strike in Minnesota history.

While the Minnesota Nurses Association had not recommended a "no" vote, many nurses said they felt Allina's latest offer was too similar to one they rejected in August, and to the terms their union negotiators rejected during last-ditch negotiations in September to avert a strike.

A new sign reading "New Lipstick, Same Pig" appeared at the picket line outside Allina's Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis Monday morning, foreshadowing the vote result that the union announced at 10:30 p.m. in St. Paul.

Allina
"This proposal was eminently fair and went very far in addressing the issues the union raised during negotiations."

Minnesota Nurses Association
"Each of them voted with their consciences, and with their patients and their families in mind."

TOP NEWS
TRUMP CHARITY IN VIOLATION
New York attorney general orders the foundation to stop all fundraising immediately. A4



Bees added to protected list
Seven pollinator species native to Hawaii deemed endangered. A2

No hearing on immigration
Justices won't review Obama plan to spare millions deportation. A3

Ohio to resume executions
Use of new drug combination ends three-year death penalty hiatus. A3

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Japanese scientist showed how body recycles its old cells for renewal. A3

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A Dakota interpretive center could draw visitors to St. Paul preserve. B1

Now comes the cleanup
Hazelnut officials say breaking down Ryder Cup venue will take time. B1

GOP candidate arrested, jailed
Hopeful for south metro House seat cited on domestic violence. B1

SPORTS
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Cleveland pitching whiz takes over troubled baseball department. C1

What's next for Hazelnut?
The next big event is at least eight years away. C10

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Individual market is losing insurers, seeing enrollment caps. D1

HAVE YOU HEARD?
Police say robbers stole \$10 million in jewelry after tying up Kim Kardashian in her Paris residence. A2



DANGER DOWNSTREAM CAN A RIVER BE SAVED?



Dan Jennings, who raises cattle in Pope County, uses grazing methods that help the Chippewa River and its bottom line.

BUILDING A MODEL TO PROTECT RIVERS

Part 3 of 3 • Story by JOSEPHINE MARCOTTY • Photos by AARON LAVINSKY • Star Tribune staff



TERRACE, MINN. — Truth be told, Dan Jennings doesn't think much about whether his farm helps or hurts the Chippewa River, which curls slowly around his fields here in Pope County.

Nevertheless, as he stood on a rise amid a group of taciturn neighbors on a hot day in July, he was a shining example on a grassy hill of a farmer who's doing everything right for clean water — and making money to boot. Telling the group how he manages grazing, he said it comes down to one of the oldest equations in agriculture: cattle and grass.

"It is nice," he said, "to finally admit that grass is a natural resource in Minnesota."

Jennings is participating in a deceptively simple experiment here in western Minnesota known as the Chippewa



Jennings is testing hairy vetch, among cover crops that can hold soil in place.

"Because the pressure is on, something has to change."

Kylene Olson, executive director of the Chippewa River Watershed Project

Ten Percent Project. The idea, launched five years ago by local leaders and conservation groups, is to help farmers grow more grass, trees, alfalfa, oats, wheat and the like — all of which are much kinder to water than chemically intensive crops like corn and soybeans.

Raising the amount of land planted in such perennials by just 10 percentage points — from 24 percent to 34 percent of the Chippewa watershed's 1.3 million acres — would be enough to tip the river from polluted to clean.

Some 25 landowners now participate, and if they can prove its premise — that a farmer can make money without polluting the Chippewa — they could be a model for protecting threatened rivers all across the Midwest.

But progress has been excruciatingly slow — a sign of how hard it is to change farmers' thinking and to thwart the economics that dictate their

DIVERSION HALTED: State denies permit for \$2.1 billion flood diversion for Red River at Fargo. B1

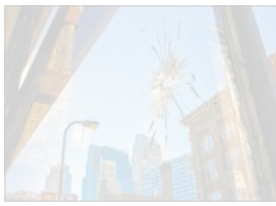
Shootings spark pledge for gang reform efforts

By LIBOR JANY
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Hours after a pair of overnight shootings Monday in Minneapolis' Warehouse District left six people wounded, fed-up city and police officials unveiled new anti-crime programs aimed at cooling some notorious hot spots — among them just outside the First Precinct police station doors in the

heart of downtown. Authorities said the shootings appeared to be tied to an escalating gang war.

"This morning's shootings in downtown Minneapolis are unacceptable. This is not who we are as a city," said Mayor Betsy Hodges in announcing the new efforts, which include an intervention program that focuses on the relatively small



A bullet hole pierced the window of a clothing store across from the downtown police station after Monday's shootings.

Tension between Cold War foes grows

U.S. suspends talks with Moscow over Syria.

By MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Already tetchy, relations between the United States and Russia plummeted Monday as Washington suspended diplomatic contacts with Moscow over failed efforts to end the war in Syria and President Vladimir Putin put on hold a deal with the U.S. on disposing weapons-grade plutonium.

On the surface, the suspensions were unrelated. But both underscored deep mistrust and rising tensions between the former Cold War foes, who are increasingly at odds on a number of issues, particularly Syria and Ukraine. In the short term, the end of discussions on Syria deals a potential death blow to efforts to slow the civil war and begin negotiations on possible elections in the country that could mean the ouster of President Bashar Assad.

Underscoring the deterioration between the U.S. and Russia, Putin suspended a deal on plutonium disposal hours before the U.S. announcement.

See SYRIA on A5 ▶



Lenny Russo opened Heartland in 2002 to showcase Midwestern ingredients.

Trendsetting Heartland is closing doors

By RICK NELSON
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Heartland Restaurant & Wine Bar, St. Paul's pioneering farm-to-table dining powerhouse, will close its doors Dec. 31.

"People are going to ask me to blame it on the increase in the minimum wage, or rising property taxes, or something like that," said chef and co-owner Lenny Russo, a standard-setting dean of the local foods movement with an influential, decades-long career.

"No. The restaurant is closing because we're done, and we want to do other things. I'm 58. I don't have any peeps my age. They're all much younger than me. It's time."

Russo and wife Mega Hoehn opened Heartland in a 2,700-square-foot storefront in St. Paul's Macalester-Groveland neighborhood in 2002. Their goal: showcasing Midwestern

See HEARTLAND on A7 ▶

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STAR TRIBUNE Minneapolis, St. Paul MN • Volume XXXV • No. 183 • Oct. 4, 2016
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DANGER DOWNSTREAM THE CHIPPEWA RIVER



Dan Jenniges uses rotational grazing, in which livestock graze and fertilize his fields — saving him hefty costs for chemicals and commercial feed — and then sells the cattle to pay the bills.

‘SOMETHING HAS TO CHANGE’

• **CHIPPEWA** from A1
decisions. After five years in which high commodity prices drove most Minnesota farmers to plant more corn, the Chippewa watershed has gained about 13,000 acres of grass and other perennials.

Or about 10 percent of the 10 percent.

“We’ve been fighting against some huge tides,” said Robin Moore, project coordinator for the Minnesota Land Stewardship Project, one of the lead conservation groups. “All that money people were making from high [priced] beans and corn. That was hard.”

Still, kitchen table by kitchen table, farmers are joining the conversation. “It’s encouraging that we have people willing to go outside the box,” said Kyle Olson, executive director of the Chippewa River Watershed Project.

Five years ago, she said, only four farmers in the watershed routinely planted cover crops — like oats and radishes — which protect soil from the winter winds that turn snow into black “snirt” and stop contaminated runoff in the spring, she said. That number has grown sixfold, by her estimate.

“Because the pressure is on,” she said. “Something has to change.”

An intriguing pattern

The Chippewa is a small, emerald green river that starts south of Fergus Falls and meanders peacefully for 153 miles through its rural watershed before merging with the Minnesota River in Montevideo. It’s also one of the most studied rivers in the state, which means that conservationists have a clear picture of how rural land use drives pollution in rivers.

Along the east branch of the Chippewa, which flows through hilly land more given to pastures, the water is pretty clean, according to one state analysis. But the rest of the watershed has more land devoted to row crops, and the water shows it. One creek that flows through an area of rich soils and flat terrain — ideal for row crops — is the source for most of the nitrates and phosphorus that the Chippewa delivers to the Minnesota.

But the state’s research turned up an intriguing pattern: Wherever a third of the land was covered by grasses or other perennials, the lakes and streams were significantly healthier. That’s largely because far less soil was discharged into the water by rain and spring snowmelt, said George Boody, executive director of the Land Stewardship Project. The dirt that flows from bare fields into streams and creeks is the vehicle that carries pollutants and makes the water cloudy enough to kill plants and fish.

In fact, said Boody, 34 percent of almost any kind of land cover — trees, grass, small grains like oats or cover crops like radishes

— sufficed to keep water in the adjacent tributary clean rather than polluted. And despite the dominance of farming, about 24 percent of the basin was already protected by perennials. In short, it was almost there.

“And that’s how it got started,” he said of the Ten Percent Project.

But Moore and other advocates are not just talking about water quality. They envision a different way to farm — one that focuses on healthy soil, a variety of crops, and bottom-line results rather than the sheer volume of bushels produced per acre.

“A smaller diversified farm can be more profitable than corn and beans,” Moore said.

Happy cows

Jenniges is a case in point. On a steamy morning in July, he drove his pickup truck down a curvy road northeast of Montevideo, through an unlocked gate, and bumped across a pasture outlined with white plastic fence posts and steel tension wire.

He knew his cattle were down by the river under the trees, and sure enough, they came thundering through the woods as soon as he honked his horn and bellowed for them. Lowing with anticipation, they surged through a gate, rounded the corner and headed into the next pasture. They knew what was waiting: tall, green grass that hadn’t been touched for at least two months.

Jenniges uses a technique called rotational grazing — moving his cattle every five days from one small pasture to another and allowing the grass in each to rest and recover. By the time he brings them back to the first pasture, it’s had 60 to 80 days to regrow.

It’s good for the grass, the butterflies, the birds and the water. But most importantly, it’s good for his bottom line.

“I don’t get too excited about saying it’s all for water quality,” he said.

While most of his rolling land is planted in grass, Jenniges also grows some corn, oats, hay, alfalfa, and a variety of other crops that he feeds to his animals.

“Everything I raise I put through livestock,” he said. “What he gets out the other end is fertilizer for his fields. Which makes him, he jokes, mostly a manure farmer.”

It’s a highly efficient cycle that takes advantage of nature rather than fighting it: Using livestock to fertilize his fields saves him hefty input costs for chemicals and commercial feed, and selling the cattle for slaughter pays his bills.

But not everyone wants to farm that way.

“I don’t have the gene for raising cattle,” said Keith Poier, who farms 1,200 acres just south of Jenniges, where the land flattens out and row crops stretch to the horizon. Poier grows corn,



GOOD FOR THE SOIL: At a Land Stewardship event in Pope County, at top, farmers learned techniques for improving soil and thereby water. Above, Jenniges’ cattle operation has become a model, even though “I don’t get too excited about saying it’s all for water quality.”

CHIPPEWA RIVER WATERSHED

The Chippewa River flows south from its headwaters in Otter Tail County, draining a largely agricultural watershed of 1.3 million acres. By the time it joins the Minnesota River at Montevideo, it carries heavy loads of phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment. But a coalition of conservationists and farmers say that adding just 10 percentage points more grass and other natural cover to the land could make the river healthy again.

RAY GRUMNEY • Star Tribune; Sources: USGS, Esri

soybeans and sugar beets, and he’s experimenting with cover crops on a 15-acre cornfield.

The results have not been stellar. “The cover crop was wheat, and the price of wheat is not conducive to profit,” Poier said. The wheat improves the quality of soil and holds it in place, he acknowledges. “But it’s hard to put a number on that.”

There’s no question that planting more perennial grasses and cover crops improves water quality, but that’s not enough to persuade farmers who are committed to raising corn and soybeans, said Shawn Schotter, a scientist at the St. Croix Watershed Research Station.

For farmers like Jenniges, it’s the livestock that makes it work, Schotter said.

“If we want more cover crops, we need to find ways to make them profitable,” he said.

Surprising arithmetic

At the University of Minnesota’s Forever Green project, crop scientists are trying to do just that.

Researchers are experimenting with new strains like intermediate wheat grass and field pennycress, an oilseed that can be used for biofuels. Schotter said some grasses can replace coal in power plants, and wheat grass seeds can be fed to hogs. Meanwhile, Byron Braaten is thinking about crops he can grow now.

Last spring, Moore of the Land Stewardship Project spent an afternoon at Braaten’s kitchen table not far from the Chippewa River. Working with Braaten’s son-in-law, Peder Gerde, they ran the family’s cattle and row-crop operation through a new computer program designed by the Land Stewardship Project. It calculates profits from combinations of six different crop rotations, weighing crops for feed against row crops and soybeans.

The point, said Moore, is that corn and soybeans, the combination that dominates Minnesota agriculture, are not the only way to make money. Braaten and Gerde scratched their heads over the cost of producing row crops. Seed costs? Gas for the tractor? Fertilizer? Hauling and trucking? Rent for farmland? It all goes in the calculator and it all adds up.

“You should add some for headache,” said his wife, Joanne Braaten.

Finally, the answer emerged. After six years, they could save so much money by adding three years of alfalfa that they would net twice as much money per acre compared with planting corn.

The two farmers looked at each and laughed. “Well, hey,” said Gerde. “Let’s grow more corn!”

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About this series

Danger Downstream examines the way dramatic changes to Minnesota’s landscape are jeopardizing water quality.

Part 1: Deforestation, irrigation and urban development pose growing threats to the watershed of the Upper Mississippi, and Minnesota is in a race to protect it.

Part 2: Pollution is rising in the Red River, but the price is paid far downstream with massive and sometimes toxic algae blooms in Lake Winnipeg.

Part 3: In western Minnesota, an ambitious but simple experiment on the Chippewa River shows what it would take to save a river before it’s too late.

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