

Local gas prices continue to fall

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Average retail gasoline prices in Minnesota have fallen 11.1 cents in the past week, averaging \$2.16 per gallon Sunday, according to GasBuddy’s daily survey of 2,856 gas outlets in Minnesota. This compares with the national average that has decreased 9.6 cents in the last week to \$2.28 per gallon, according to gasoline price website MinnesotaGasPrices.com.

Regular gas prices in International Falls ranged from \$1.98 to \$2.19 per gallon, according to the site.

Including the change in gas prices in Minnesota during the past week, prices Sunday were 98.3 cents per gallon lower compared to the same day one year ago and are 52 cents per gallon lower than a month ago. The national average has decreased 50.6 cents per gallon during the last month and stands 100.5 cents per gallon lower than this day one year ago.

“The dramatic decline at the pump continues to reap significant savings for the motoring public—over \$525 million less spent every day versus this past summer, or \$375 million

less than the same time last year,” said Patrick DeHaan, senior petroleum analyst with GasBuddy. “The slump in crude oil has wavered slightly and we’re in the fourth quarter of the game. However, there is still a chance that crude prices resume their slump again, and carry the pump plunge into overtime,” DeHaan said.

Gas prices have fallen \$1.85 per gallon in Michigan since June 28, the largest drop in the nation. Following close behind: Kentucky, down \$1.66 per gallon, Indiana, down \$1.62 per gallon, Ohio, down \$1.61 per gallon, and Illinois, down \$1.60 per gallon over the same time frame. More statistics can be found at media.gasbuddy.com.

GasBuddy.com is a tool to help motorists save money at the pump by collecting gas price data and displaying it on websites and on a free smartphone app that has been downloaded over 37 million times. The site operates MinnesotaGasPrices.com and more than 250 similar websites that track gasoline prices at more than 140,000 gasoline stations in the United States and Canada.

Body temp, fainting and nocturia

Q. What is a normal body temperature?

A. Body temperature fluctuates during the day between 97 Fahrenheit and 99 F. When you wake up, your temperature is at the low end of the range; it increases as the day progresses.

The common standard for a “normal” temperature is 98.6 F. However, the range of normal is about a degree above or below 98.6.

An oral temperature above 100 degrees F or a rectal or ear temperature above 101 F is considered a fever in the majority of adults.

If your temperature reaches 103 F, you should contact a physician. Another alarm bell is a fever that lasts more than three days.

A fever usually means your body is fighting an infection from bacteria or a virus. In older adults, the immune system doesn’t function as efficiently as it does in younger people. The body’s fever response to infection is not always automatic in elderly people. More than 20 percent of adults over age 65 who have serious



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HEALTH CARE WRITER

bacterial infections do not have fevers.

Q. Do older people faint more than younger people?

A. Yes. When you pass 70 years, you double the chances of fainting. And the odds triple after 80. Fainting is common. About one in three people faint at least once in a lifetime.

Syncopal (SINK-o-pea) is the medical word for fainting or a temporary — a few seconds — loss of consciousness. Fainting happens when your brain isn’t getting enough oxygen from your blood supply.

Syncopal is often foreshadowed by “premonitory symptoms” that include nausea, feeling lightheaded and

irregular heartbeats. Syncopal is a symptom, not a medical condition. Syncopal can be an indicator of a serious problem, so it should not be taken lightly. If you have a fainting spell, get checked out by a doctor. It’s sometimes difficult to diagnose syncopal in seniors because there can be multiple causes.

Q. What is “nocturia”?

A. Nocturia is the need to urinate at night. Both men and women get nocturia. Some people with severe nocturia get up as many as six times a night to go to the bathroom. The International Continence Society defines nocturia as two or more voids at night.

Nocturia is more common among seniors than younger people. In a survey taken by the National Sleep Foundation, about two thirds of the adults (55 to 84 years old) polled reported an urge to go to the bathroom at least several nights a week.

There is a variety of reasons for nocturia in older people. First, we produce

less of a hormone that helps us retain fluid. Because of this decreased capacity, seniors produce more urine at night. Second, the bladder — a muscular sac — loses its capacity to hold urine. Third, we have more health problems that can affect the bladder.

Many men suffer from nocturia because of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), also known as enlarged prostate. The prostate is a walnut-size organ that surrounds the tube (urethra) that carries urine from the bladder and out of your body.

Pelvic organ displacement, menopause and childbirth can cause nocturia in many women. The pelvic floor is a network of muscles, ligaments and other tissues that hold up the pelvic organs: the vagina, rectum, uterus and bladder. When this hammock-like network weakens, the organs can slip out of place and create disorders.

If you would like to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezer.com.

Cicetti is a health care writer with more than 40 years of journalistic experience.

New course puts drivers behind the wheel

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

A new program being offered at Rainy River Community College this spring is designed to help students hit the road and fill a local need for truck drivers.

The Commercial Truck Driving certificate program at RRCC runs from Jan. 12 to May 14, consists of 16 credits, and includes classroom education, behind the wheel training, additional classes for commercial trucking, and general education classes suited towards the trucking industry.

Course admission requires a valid driver’s license, an approved Minnesota State Colleges and Universities student vehicle use agreement, a Minnesota Department of Transportation controlled substance test, a DOT physical examination and a CDL Class A permit.

Tammy Cook, RRCC director of instructional services, said because the MnSCU agreement and drug

More information

For more information on the course, contact Tammy Cook at 218-285-2265 or by email at Tammy.Cook@rainyriver.edu.

test require some processing time, the deadline to apply for the program is about a week before classes begin.

The CDL classes in the program will be taught in the college’s telepresence room by instructors at Hibbing Community College, Cook said. John Bright, the program coordinator at HCC, will join two other instructors in teaching the students.

RRCC is offering the program due to a high area demand for truckers, Cook said.

“The local trucking companies have such a demand for truckers, we’re trying to meet that demand,” Cook said. “We’re also hoping to meet the demands of work-

ers who need retraining.”

Kevin Nagurski, of Nagurski Transportation, said his business could use at least five more drivers at the moment, and has been struggling to find drivers for the past year.

“We’re pretty much in constant need, because there’s always some turnover, so we’re always looking,” Nagurski said. “We can’t grow, because we’re just looking to maintain the amount of drivers we have.”

A lack of truck drivers has been a problem for the transportation industry for years, Nagurski said. An uptick in the economy means workers are taking jobs in mining, construction, or in the North Dakota oilfields, he said, and not getting behind the wheel.

“There’s a lack of young people getting into truck driving,” Nagurski said.

There’s quite a bit of interest in the course already, Cook said, with three enrolled at RRCC and six or seven on the Hibbing campus. The CDL courses are

scheduled in the afternoons during the week, she said, and the general education classes follow the regular course schedule.

Students might possibly have to travel to take the behind-the-wheel portion of the course and license exam, Cook said. They’re working to bring the testing truck and Bright to RRCC for the behind the wheel, she said. If not, they’ll bring the students down to Hibbing in a condensed format, so they’re not making multiple trips.

Nagurski said having a CDL course locally is more convenient for drivers even if they still have to travel to take the behind the wheel portion. His biggest problem comes from finding experienced drivers, he said, as insurance requirements dictate a certain amount of experience for a driver before they can be hired.

The program cost is on a per credit rate of \$177.43 for a Minnesota resident, Cook said, which puts the overall cost of tuition at fees at \$2,838.

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AGENDA

City of International Falls
City Council Organizational Meeting
4:30 P.M., Monday, January 5, 2015
Council Chamber, 600 Fourth Street

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ORGANIZATIONAL BUSINESS

- Administer Oath of Office to election winners Cynthia Jaksa, West Ward Councilor; Harley M. Droba, Center Ward Councilor; Brian Briggs, East Ward Councilor (will not be present) - City Administrator Anderson.
- Selection of Council President Pro-tem (Council action-motion)
- Approve 2015 City Council meeting schedule and location (Council action-motion)
- Mayoral appointment of members to internal and external committees for City Council confirmation (Council action-motion)
- Appointments (Council action-motion)
 - City Attorney
 - Health Officer
 - Board of Health – three members consisting of Fire Chief, Police Chief, Health Officer
 - City Engineer
 - City Surveyor
- Approval of payroll dates – biweekly on Tuesday, commencing 1/6/2015 (Council action-motion)
- Resolution # - 15 Designation of Depositors (Council action-motion)
- Designation of official newspaper for required publications – The Journal (Council action-motion)

ADJOURNMENT

The City of International Falls complies with the ADA. Individuals with disabilities requiring special aids should contact the City Administrator, 600 Fourth Street, International Falls, MN, 56649, 218-283-9484, 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

DEED program wins national award

MN DEED REPORT

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has won a national award for improving its appeals process in state unemployment insurance cases.

The U.S. Department of Labor presented DEED with its “2014 Performance Excellence Award for Unemployment Insurance Appeals” during the recent National Association of State Workforce Agencies annual UI directors’ conference in Salt Lake City.

DEED received the award

for creating a new, innovative training program for its unemployment law judges and for developing an online self-service scheduling system for appealing decisions on unemployment insurance benefits.

As a result of these changes, Minnesota has achieved a 100 percent score for six consecutive quarters based on the U.S. Depart-



Katie Clark
Sieben

ment of Labor’s quality review. The changes also enabled Minnesota to issue timely unemployment appeals decisions over the last several years, thus reducing improper benefit overpayments and ensuring that citizens who were entitled to benefits did not have lengthy wait times to receive those payments.

Minnesota currently exceeds federal standards for timeliness, issuing 88 percent of all appeal decisions within 30 days of appeal and 96 percent of decisions within 45 days of appeal. The average age of a pend-

ing case is now 13.5 days.

DEED won the award in the large-state category. Utah won the medium-state award, while Alaska won the small-state award.

DEED’s UI program provides temporary partial wage replacement for workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. Under state law, UI clients can appeal if they are not satisfied with a benefits determination by the UI Program. The appeal includes the right to a fair and impartial hearing before an unemployment law judge.

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