

LOCALNEWS

Rep. David Dill: Propane must be used wisely

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

This winter’s frigid weather is now taking aim at Minnesotans’ pocketbooks, Minnesota Rep. David Dill says in a release.

“Propane is already in scarce supply in the Upper Midwest, and the price of it is skyrocketing,” said Dill. “One company reports that it has increased its cost from about \$1.20 a unit to about \$5.”

Dill said one of the “biggest culprits in the situation is Kinder Morgan’s decision to ‘reverse’ its Cochon Pipeline,

using it to move propane out of Minnesota, rather than into Minnesota.” The target date for this action is July 1. He said in the time approaching that date, Kinder Morgan is only using half of its pump stations while shutting down the remainder so they can be retrofitted and the flow reversed in preparation for the northern flow. The remaining pumps serving Minnesotans will be able to provide 76,000 barrels a day. That’s in comparison with 112,000 barrels we’re used to be seeing delivered.

Combine that with a regu-



Rep. David Dill

lar Minnesota winter, very cold weather all the way to the Gulf of Mexico and increased grain drying in the farm belt, Dill said it’s easy to see how Minnesota arrived at this crisis point.

“Elected officials and regulators are pulling out the stops to lessen the shortage and insure shortages such as this one does not happen

again,” said Dill. “Propane is too critical to Minnesota’s homeowners, businesses, agriculture and industry.

Dill said to avoid another shortage the state must promote the efficient use of the limited supply of propane by making emergency energy efficiency grants to livestock producers through the Rural Energy for America program, known as REAP. “I installed an instant tankless whole house water heater replacing my storage tank unit,” he said.

In response to the significant cost increases in pro-

pane, the U.S. Commerce Department is taking the necessary steps to increase low income crisis payments from \$500 to \$1,000 for applicants currently heating their homes with propane and heating oil. These payments could be available as soon as this week.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce recently announced additional financial assistance for eligible Minnesotans currently heating their homes with propane and heating oil through the Minnesota’s Energy Assistance Program, known as EAP, with additional payments available as early as next week. Households with an income less than 50 percent of the state median income (\$43,642 for a family of four) may qualify. To find a list of local service providers and information on applying

for the Minnesota Energy Assistance Program, call 1-800-657-3710 or 651-539-1882 or visit the Energy Assistance section of the Division of Energy Resources website: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumers/Heating-Assistance/>.

There’s also a newly-created hotline operating Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for Minnesotans who have questions about the current propane situation or who are in danger of running out of heating fuel. Call for 1-800-657-3504 for more info.

For information on heating aid available to Koochiching County residents, call 1-218-283-9491, and for residents of Lake, Cook and St. Louis counties, 1-218-749-2912.

Dill also said people may contact his staff by calling 651-296-2190 or emailing him at rep.david.dill@house.mn.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Koochiching County is seeking proposals for the removal and proper disposal of tires from the solid waste complex near International Falls, MN. The successful applicant will enter into a two year contract with Koochiching County.

Respondents must meet all licensing and insurance requirements as defined by MN State Statute and/or Koochiching County.

The selection process will not be based solely on the lowest bid. Koochiching County will also consider the applicant’s company performance history and the overall proposal package to ensure the best services for Koochiching County residents.

Proposals will be accepted until 2:00 p.m. on February 28, 2014 at the Koochiching County Auditor’s Office, 715 4th Street, Int’l Falls, MN 56649.

For a copy of the complete “Request for Proposal”, please contact the Environmental Services Department at 218-283-1157.

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Minnesota EDL used for border crossing

New IDs available now

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Minnesotans are now able to use an enhanced driver’s license to meet border crossing regulations.

United States Customs and Border Protection in partnership with the state of Minnesota announced Monday the Minnesota enhanced driver’s license is the newest Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative compliant document for entry into the U.S. at all land and sea ports of entry. The program began the same day as the announcement.

When an enhanced driver’s license, known as an EDL, is presented by a U.S. citizen traveler, no other documentation is required for purposes of proving identity and citizenship and entering the U.S.

U.S. CBP staff have worked closely with states and Canadian provinces to develop a secure, highly tamper resistant enhanced driver’s license, known as an EDL, that includes vicinity radio frequency identification, known as RFID, capability; a machine readable zone – optical character read, known as MRZ-OCR; and contains multiple layers of overt, covert and forensic security features.

Minnesota brings the number of U.S. states with EDLs to five, joining Michigan, New York, Vermont and Washington. The Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec are also currently issuing EDLs.

The enhanced driver’s license is an acceptable standalone Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, or WHTI, compliant document for entry into the United States at all land and sea ports of entry. The Minnesota EDL is only available to U.S. citizens.

For more information about the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, visit www.dhs.gov or www.GetYouHome.gov.

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