

# LOCALNEWS

## The wet dog days of summer

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

International Falls may have four distinct seasons, but Mother Nature Monday reminded residents why Borderland is dubbed the Icebox of the Nation.

A frost advisory issued by the National Weather Service in Duluth Sunday tagged this July as anything but normal. Higher than average rainfall, along with record daily low temperatures puts July's weather on both ends of the spectrum.

Sunday's frost advisory didn't lead to any below-freezing temperatures, but according to Steve Gohde, observing program leader at the NWS, other factors like topography, the shape or features of the land, and wind flow can affect whether or not the frost process occurs.

But there were still reports of signs of winter-like weather.

"One guy called and said he had ice on his shingles at his farm about 20 miles south of International Falls," Gohde said.

The low temperatures the area has been experiencing have been caused by a persistent low pres-

sure area over Hudson Bay, and because of the slow movement of the low pressure system, nothing has been able to break the low temperatures, Gohde said. While the weather may have seemed strange and unique, he said when looking at the historical numbers and averages, it wasn't "greatly unusual."

Unfortunately, with the beginning of August looming, the cooler weather seems to be here to stay, Gohde said. The meteorologist noted there isn't anything coming that could break up this cool, low pressure system, however, it does appear that it will be a little bit drier than it has been.

"We're stuck in a persistent pattern," he said. "Looks like we'll have an extended period of below-normal precipitation, so at least that's something."

The abundance of rain in July didn't lead to a record, but it was significantly higher than monthly averages. The official total was 7.39 inches as of Tuesday morning, which is 3.88 inches above average, Gohde said. That's good enough for sixth wettest July on record. The 9.52 inches of rainfall recorded in 1966 comes in

at first place.

Fortunately the rainfall didn't lead to flooding in the area, which can be credited to the terrain, Gohde said.

"Koochiching County doesn't have a lot of lakes, there's more bogs, which soaked a lot of the rain up," he said. "It did a great job of recharging the lower soil, which helps with the recent drought we had."

The rain hasn't made for a favorable summer for hay farmers, Gohde added. They need to consider the precipitation when it comes to finding a time to cut their hay, so the wet weather has made that tough for them.

"This has made it challenging for hay farmers, they've been calling (the station) a lot," he said. "Our bigger and most frequent complaints have been from hay farmers."

The severe weather from last Thursday resulted in nickel-sized hail and a daily rainfall record of 2.23 inches, which beat the previous record of 2.19 inches set in 1950.

As Borderland prepares for August and the back-to-school season, it seems that cooler, drier temperatures will be the norm.

## STOP, DROP AND ROLL



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

Local government employees gather in front of the library Friday during a courthouse evacuation drill. Law enforcement secured the building for the drill that gave courthouse staff the information on how to handle an actual emergency event. The County Safety Committee developed the emergency response plan.

## Local connection to book on heyday of Polaris racing team

### JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

A new book, "Starfire Kids Midnight Blue Express" about the Polaris Professional Racing Team from 1956-1978 has a Borderland connection.

The book, to be unveiled Saturday at the Polaris Experience Center, located at 205 Fifth Ave. S.W. in Roseau, the birthplace of Polairs, is written by Ranier resident Jim Saurdiffe's brother, Larry Preston, founder of VintageSleds.com

Saurdiffe, a vintage snowmobile aficionado, helps to organize the annual vintage sled ride on Rainy Lake known as Live on Skis.

A blog post from Brad

Dokken of the Grand Forks Herald about the book said Saturday's book debut in Roseau will include a vintage snowmobile show scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and several of the former Polaris racers are expected to sign autographs from 10 a.m. to noon.

"From the tiny farm community of Roseau, Minnesota, comes the story of the men and machines of Polaris snowmobile racing that dominated the sport from the 1950's until a tragic accident ended it all in 1978," describes a website entry on the book. "From David Johnson, to Bob Eastman through Jerry Bunke, Starfire Kids tells the inside

story on how a rag-tag group of farmers, welders and inventors came together to be the best of the best. The first book from Vintagesleds.com author Larry Preston is the untold story of one of the most successful efforts in motor sports."

Dokken blogged that while he'd only had a chance to read the first chapter of Preston's book, "his passion for snowmobile racing in its heyday is obvious from the get-go. That's not by coincidence, perhaps, because Preston's grandfather, Herb Borah, was the original CEO of Polaris.

See the VintageSleds.com website and Facebook page for more about the book.



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