

# COMMUNITYNEWS

ASK A TROOPER

## Statistics on vehicle miles traveled

BY SGT. CURT S. MOWERS  
Minnesota State Patrol

**Q: I know that Minnesota is doing well on our low fatal rate, but do we have the stats on the vehicle miles traveled when compared to our fatal numbers? How are we doing overall in recent years compared to the past?**

**A:** The vehicle miles traveled rate is something that is kept track of by the De-

partment of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety. The information from DPS is offered to answer your question:

The VMT-based fatality rate for 2012 is 0.69, which is one of the lowest rates in the nation. The VMT fatality rate has shown dramatic improvement in the last five decades — the VMT was 5.52 in 1966!

Our best year since 1944 was in 2011, when the VMT-based fatality rate was 0.65,

one of the lowest in the nation.

DPS' online records only go back to 2004, but I know that we did have a spike with 657 deaths that year. Since 2002, the fatal count itself has gone down every year except 2007 and 2012. Because of the decrease in traffic deaths, the VMT-based fatality rate for 2004 was 1.00. This is a decrease from 2003 when the fatality rate was 1.18.

However, the VMT fatal-

ity rate has shown dramatic improvement in the last three decades. For example, 1990 had a rate of 1.47, 1980 had a rate of 3.03, and 1970 had a rate of 4.41. Of course, this means that as more drivers travel more miles each year, the number of people killed in proportion to the number of miles driven has decreased (as a general rule).

The fatality rate in Minnesota per 100 million vehicle miles traveled remains

low and we likely won't know the 2013 driving year stats for a few months into 2014. As I write this, we are nearing the end of the year and are running similar to last year, but we still have time to lower that rate.

Law enforcement is working very hard with special enforcement projects to help lower our VMT fatality rate. You can do your part if you slow down, buckle up, drive sober and pay attention. Thanks for asking.

## BORDERLAND BRIEFS

### KERRY PARK RINK CLOSED

The Kerry Park outdoor skating rink is closed until further notice due to equipment failures posing a safety concern.

### GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE

The next grant application deadline for the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund is Jan. 2. Non-profit entities can apply for up to \$5,000 for projects that benefit Koochiching County residents in such areas as health, education, beautification and the arts. Applications can be acquired from Randy Pozniak, CPA, 213 Third St., International Falls, 283-8148.

### EXERCISE PROGRAM

Rainy Lake Medical Center will offer The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program. The eight-week program, developed by physical therapists, to help decrease arthritis pain, relieve stiffness, increase flexibility, and improve range of motion. The program will meet at the clinic campus on from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning Jan. 7 until Feb. 27. Cost is \$35 per person. To register and for more information, call the RLMC Therapy and Wellness Center at 283-5420.

### DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Rainy Lake Medical Center will present a Diabetes Support Group from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Jan. 7 at the clinic campus community room. Topics are "Getting Back on Track in the New Year" and "Ask the Dietitian." Speaker is Heather Pitschka, dietitian. Those planning to attend should call 283-9431, as space is limited.

## LOTTERY

<b>SUNDAY'S DAILY 3</b> 9, 9, 9	<b>FRIDAY'S MEGA MILLIONS</b> 3, 4, 31, 49, 57
<b>SUNDAY'S NORTHSTAR CASH</b> 1, 8, 15, 17, 31	<b>MEGA BALL</b> 6
<b>FRIDAY'S GOPHER 5</b> 5, 17, 23, 29, 34	<b>SATURDAY'S POWERBALL</b> 25, 36, 40, 45, 51
<b>SATURDAY'S HOT LOTTO</b> 9, 16, 18, 25, 35	<b>POWERBALL</b> 8
<b>HOT BALL</b> 19	

## CALENDAR

### TODAY

- Backus Kids Club closed.
- Backus Community Center office closed.

### WEDNESDAY

- Backus Kids Club closed.
- Backus Community Center, building closed.
- Annual Christmas Day Dinner, 2-6 p.m., Road House.

### THURSDAY

- Backus Kids Club open, 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Bone Builders, 10 a.m., Woodland Apartments.
- Falls Hunger Coalition Food Shelf open, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 1000 Fifth St.
- Northland Art Society open, various arts, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Backus, Room 114.
- Storytime, 10:30 a.m., International Falls Public Library.
- Cardiac support group, 11:30 a.m., Koochiching County Senior Center.
- Flu Clinic, noon-4 p.m., Koochiching County Health Department.
- Westfork Literary Society, 2 p.m.
- Northland Art Society open, various arts, 4-8 p.m., Backus, Room 114.
- Adventure Corps, 4:30-6 p.m., The Salvation Army.
- Weight Watchers, 4:45-5:15 p.m. weigh-in; 5:15 meeting, Zion Lutheran Church.
- Burgers Supper, 5 p.m., Moose Lodge.
- Falls Trap Club, trap shooting, 5:30 p.m.,

Moonlight Rock Road.

- Community Café, free meals served, 5:30-6 p.m., beef stew, dinner rolls, fruit, Backus Community Center.
- Beginner's Tae Kwon Do, 5:45 p.m., Falls Elementary School gymnasium or cafeteria.
- The Lamplighters, women's support group for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, 6-8 p.m., Friends Against Abuse, 407 Fourth St.
- Cribbage, 7 p.m., Moose Lodge.
- Fresh Start, 7:30 p.m., Alano Club.

### FRIDAY

- Backus Kids Club open, 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Exercise, 10-11 a.m., Backus Auditorium gymnasium.
- Falls Hunger Coalition Food Shelf open, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 1000 Fifth St.
- Serenity Sisters, Women's A.A., noon, Backus, Rational Alternatives, Room 101.
- Elks Lodge Friday Light Meal, 5:30 p.m., French dip and French fries.
- Narcotics Anonymous, 6 p.m., Alano Club.
- Grape Vine Group, 7:30 p.m., Alano Club, 410 Fifth Ave.

### SATURDAY

- Moose Lodge events – Open, noon; Bingo, 1 p.m.; BBQ ribs supper, 6 (reservations, 283-3615).
- Open Gym, 3-5 p.m., Backus Community Center.
- A.A., 7 p.m., Alano Club.

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