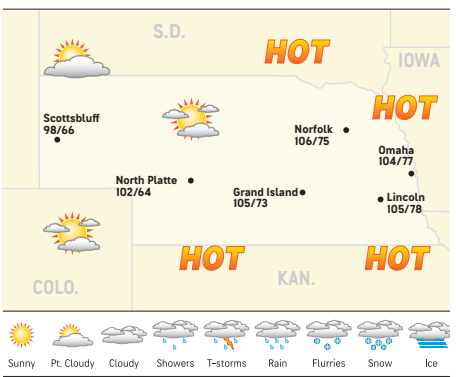


SUMMARY

Expect the excessive heat to continue through midweek as sunshine on Wednesday pushes the high to near 106 and on Thursday to 99.

NEBRASKA - WEDNESDAY



Sunshine will push highs in the eastern portions of the state into the triple digits on Wednesday and Thursday.

ALMANAC

Norfolk - High Monday, 100 (record); low Tuesday morning, 78. Record high temperature for Aug. 21, 100 in 1914; record low, 45 in 1939.

Precipitation - Monday, 0; month, 2.64; departure, .18; since Jan. 1, 16.30; departure, -3.09.

State/nation - State high Monday, 108 at Hebron; state low Tuesday morning, 58 at Alliance.

Other data - Sunrise Wednesday, 6:45 a.m.; sunset Wednesday, 8:18 p.m.

Table showing Norfolk and Nebraska high and low temperatures for Monday and Tuesday.

THE UNIFORM & LINEN RENTAL COMPANY advertisement with logo and contact info.

9x9 Sudoku puzzle grid.

SUDOKU: HOW TO PLAY

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9-by-9 grid with several given numbers.

ONLINE EXTRA THIS WEEK'S POLLS advertisement with QR code.

TUESDAY

Table of weather data for Tuesday across the nation, including temperature and precipitation.

MONDAY

Table of weather data for Monday across the state, including temperature and precipitation.

Crisis

Continued from Page 1-

got hold of emergency management. Rescue personnel, officials and city employees promptly organized a pre-planning meeting on what to expect and what their role would be in the impending flooding.

"We were still grossly unprepared for what hit us. We've never experienced anything like that before," Dolesh said of the historic level of flooding that impacted Pierce and numerous other parts of Northeast Nebraska.

"But the article at the Daily News - if it hadn't been for that and the meteorology information, we would have been far less prepared because we wouldn't have taken the time to do the meeting the night before (the flooding)."

Once the flood did hit Pierce, the Daily News didn't let up on its coverage. A multiple-part series of stories detailed updates on the flooding and how the weather was affecting the region.

"They were awesome on getting information out for us. You know, when you get a situation like that, not everybody has internet and Facebook. Sometimes you have to get it out the old-fashioned way, and the Daily News was one way that worked very well for us," Dolesh said.

Throughout the flood coverage, the Daily News remained in contact with Pierce officials to see how the newspaper could help by sharing pertinent information.

"I thought (the Daily News) did an 'A plus' job on helping us," Dolesh said. "They were very courteous when they did their interviews. Sometimes, we'd been up for 24 or 36 hours straight, and they obviously knew it and were very mindful of that."

Dolesh noted that part of the trust he has in the Daily News stems from the fact that its reporters are locals themselves. One reporter who did the bulk of the immediate reporting on the Pierce flooding lives in Pierce.

"Reporters come from the towns that these incidents are impacting, and people read that and they see and know who the author is," Dolesh said. "It's small-town news helping small towns."

RESPONDING WHEN CRISIS HITS

Whenever local crises have struck, the Daily News strives to respond with timely and thorough reporting that keeps readers informed and updated.

As another example, at least one tornado ravaged the community of Pilger in June 2014, causing damage, injury, unrest and chaos. The Daily News published articles regarding the tornado damage and stories



DAILY NEWS ARCHIVES

WATER SURROUNDS Premier Estates of Pierce in March 2019. "We were still grossly unprepared for what hit us. We've never experienced anything like that before," Pierce fire chief Steve Dolesh said of the historic flooding.

of community members working together to clean up after the storm for the rest of June - and has published updates around the anniversary since then.

Besides sharing basic information, the Daily News assisted emergency response personnel and community officials in organizing volunteer teams to aid in cleanup.

"(The Daily News) played a vital role in informing the public what had actually transpired and what we had to do in the aftermath as far as controlling the scene," Stanton County Sheriff Mike Unger said. "They overall assisted us greatly in getting supplies donated and getting volunteers to come in when we wanted. We didn't want just everybody showing up at once. We said we didn't want people to show up for the first 24 to 48 hours because we already had a mess on our hands."

Unger has served as the Stanton County sheriff for more than three decades. As such, he's interacted with the media more times than he can count.

"Over the years, there have been a lot of instances, and the Daily News has shown great assistance in getting the facts out and information, such as when we've been looking for wanted persons or missing individuals," he said.

Unger said he appreciates the media's work even when he doesn't personally benefit from it.

"I've also seen (the Daily News) when they've been, I won't say critical of me, but had to do articles that I may have not found as flattering to myself or for this office or law enforcement," Unger said. "I still have respect for them because they did their job. And they did it professionally. And that's all anyone can ask."

Above all else, he said, the Daily News

keeps the surrounding communities informed.

"My experience with the Daily News has always been that they provide information that is legitimate. It's not just hearsay or embellishment," Unger said. "We provide them information, and they have always, in my opinion, acted with responsibility by stating the facts and getting the information that is accurate out there."

Throughout its history, there are plenty of other examples of the Daily News' commitment to coverage of breaking news.

In 1987, for example, a young local girl went missing. The Daily News consistently kept readers knowledgeable on Jill Cutshall's disappearance, including publishing details on the suspect's case in 1990 and follow-up stories as recently as last year.

In 2002, four individuals entered Norfolk's U.S. Bank at 13th Street and Pasewalk Avenue, killing several bank employees and a customer. The Daily News published countless pieces about the suspects, victims and effects on the community.

More recently, in 2022, the general manager of North Fork Area Transit allegedly embezzled \$740,000 from the nonprofit. Since then, the Daily News has closely followed Jeffrey Stewart's case, providing numerous updates on his court proceedings and decisions made therein.

I ENJOY GRABBING THE PAPER

As part of being first responders, Dolesh and Unger often see breaking news from the inside, knowing some facts and information before the media do.

But both know that if they're seeking timely, truthful information about the Norfolk area, they can find that in the Daily News.

"I'm from Norfolk originally, and I've been reading the Daily News since I was a teenager, daily," Unger said. "My family, growing up, were subscribers, and I've been a subscriber my entire adult life."

Part of the reason Unger keeps up to date is because of the straightforward, hard news the paper provides.

"As a citizen, I have found that the Daily News is very honest and forthcoming in their information. When I print it, I tend to believe it," Unger said. "They're not embellishing, they're not trying to add things or make it more glamorous or attention grabbing. They're just stating the facts."

Dolesh has had a similar experience.

"I've been a personal reader for probably 30 years," Dolesh said. "I get a hard copy every day, and I read it front to back. It's probably one of the last things I do before I go to bed, and I'm kind of lost when I don't have it."

Coverage

Continued from Page 1-

allows us to be transparent. And without that coverage, we would look less so."

Brian Bruckner, who is serving as the interim general manager of the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District, also is a staunch supporter of having a strong and independent local news source to serve a community.

"Strong local journalism is critical for telling the story of the community that it serves. Otherwise, the fabric that binds the community will become frayed," Bruckner said.

The NRD board of directors and its general manager are responsible for addressing some of the most critical natural resource issues facing their respective districts within the state, and they set strategy for natural resource conservation for generations ahead.

Bruckner said the loss of more than 2,000 local newspapers across the country over the past two decades has not only put thousands of journalists out of work, but it has left readers without a reliable source for thought-provoking news coverage on local issues.

"We might not always agree with what is printed in the local paper, but even though we disagree, we can still respect and understand that, as a member of the community, we're all facing a similar set of challenges in our daily lives," Bruckner said.

Providing citizens with the knowledge needed to understand their own community allows the starting point for meaningful conversation, especially when a newspaper provides citizens with a platform to offer feedback, such as the letters published in the "Your View" column on the Daily

News Commentary page.

That kind of two-way communication also benefits a community by helping to foster relationships.

Thompson said she has seen the way consistent education reporting has affected the communication and relationship between those working in education and citizens.

"Through our communication with the public along with forming great working relationships, many opportunities and collaborations with the business community have been created," Thompson said.

Thompson is also well aware of the responsibility that goes along with being a major source of news.

"As NPS impacts many people from Northeast Nebraska, both as an employer and their learning center, it's important people are kept abreast of current events in the education

field," she said.

That's why Norfolk Public Schools is committed to communicating to the people it serves because the district knows the community benefits from the knowledge.

"Keeping the community informed of local education matters is very important to us," Thompson said. "People want to know what's going on in their local school district, and local journalists are instrumental in the distribution of news, all while being fair and honest."

Thompson said she believes that without consistent coverage that Northeast Nebraska receives via the Daily News, there's a risk of relationship loss between citizens and the sectors that serve them.

"Should citizens be unaware of these things, we may see less interaction with community members and businesses," she said.

Case

Continued from Page 1-

134.65 hours in casinos spread across 28 separate visits. Stewart was photographed entering and leaving the casinos and is shown using his NFAT-issued vehicle while on the trips.

According to auditors, Stewart also routinely would use NFAT financial resources to make unauthorized money transfers using Zelle, a private financial services company, or directly to non-NFAT bank accounts.

The state auditor's office reported that Stewart also would write checks to pay vendor bills, submit those checks for reimbursement from the state and then never actually send the checks, thereby creating an overage in the NFAT bank balances, which he then would use for his own purposes.

The audit further revealed allegedly falsified payroll records, in addition to NFAT allowing dozens of people to drive for the transit system even though the majority of drivers didn't have valid licenses or failed to meet the requirements to drive for a transit organization.

In his letter published on Friday, Rockport asked the court for a "straight number" of the total dollar amount allegedly spent by Stewart at casinos, plus electronic transfer amounts, fraudulent check amounts and how much in county funds was used by Stewart.

Total amounts alleged to have been embezzled by Stewart have been "promoted to incite public reaction," Rockport alleges. The state auditor's of-

fice, for example, could have released the full amount of money spent by Stewart at casinos but chose not to, he said.

"There has been a lot of cross information being supplied to the public, and it has made the facts in the case being seen with a plural of viewpoints and some viewpoints are purposely structured to be (fed) to the public," Rockport wrote.

In his lengthy letter to the state auditor's office, Rockport wrote about the difficulty Stewart would have in getting a fair trial. He also took aim at the auditor's office for including photos of Stewart's wife in the audit, which Rockport alleged would allow people to "troll" her on the internet.

He did include a disclaimer in his letter to the state auditor, saying that his statements are simply his opinion. He added that his opinions were informed based on some college education and years of business reading.

The fact sheet Rockport referenced in his letter is not information that would be compiled or released by a judge, per his request. Law enforcement investigators, attorneys and auditors, instead, are the people who possess detailed reports on Stewart's alleged financial misdeeds.

But attorneys and investigators typically do not publicly comment on specific evidence contained in criminal cases, nor do they release documents like the ones Rockport is requesting until presenting the case at trial.

The Madison County Court office said on Monday that cre-

ating a fact sheet is "not something the court is going to do."

Stewart was arrested on July 14 after agreeing to turn himself in to U.S. Border Patrol officials after spending most of the previous seven months in Mexico.

The Texas native is being held at the Madison County Jail on \$500,000 bail. He was denied

a request for a reduction in his bail amount during each of his first two court hearings.

Stewart, who is represented by the Madison County Public Defender's Office, is scheduled to appear in court again Tuesday afternoon.

He would face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

FOCUS ON BUSINESS

Tuesday in the Norfolk Daily News

Schuyler native joins Peetz Koerwitz & Lafleur, PC LLO

NORFOLK — Peetz Koerwitz & Lafleur, PC LLO is pleased to announce Eric Knutson has joined the firm as an Associate Attorney. Mr. Knutson's practice focuses on estate planning, probate and trust administration, while also supporting the firm's estate and trust litigation and commercial litigation practice.



Eric Knutson

A native of Schuyler, Nebraska, Mr. Knutson received his bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, from Wayne State College, and a law degree, with distinction, from the University of Nebraska College of Law. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Knutson practiced in Northeast Nebraska and served as a deputy county attorney in several counties for 11 years.

Contact Peetz Koerwitz & Lafleur, PC LLO at 402-904-8174 or visit their website at eptlawfirm.com.

TO place your Paid Focus on Business announcements, Call Vickie (402) 371-1020 or e-mail vhrabane@norfolkdailynews.com. Deadline is Wednesday, one week prior to publication.