

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — The ping of the metal bat is a familiar sound during summer high school and college baseball tournaments around the country. North Dakota prefers the crack of wood. Rule No. 13 in North Dakota's book of high school baseball regulations reads, "The use of metal bats is not allowed. Wood or 'wood-like' composition bats must be used." The rule was put in place before the 2007 season, and state coaches agreed to review it after the season just ended. This year's vote was 18-1 to keep wood bats.

**7 CHILDREN
3 ADULTS HAD
SWINE FLU
AT MDA CAMP**

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Seven children and three adults attending a Minnesota camp for kids with muscular dystrophy contracted swine flu, but organizers say all had mild cases and recovered. The national Muscular Dystrophy Association decided to cancel dozens of its remaining summer camps across the country after also suspecting cases in Utah and Pennsylvania. The MDA of Minnesota operated the one-week session at Camp Courage for Children on Maple Lake, about 50 miles west of the Twin Cities. It ended June 12.

MCCAIN: OBAMA HAS 'DONE WELL' SO FAR

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. John McCain says his opponent in last year's presidential campaign, Barack Obama, has "done well" in his first five months in the White House. The Arizona Republican says that using a legislative scorecard to judge the presidency so far, Obama has achieved all his legislative goals. On the down side, McCain says that Obama's successes in Congress have come with little or no Republican support. McCain also is critical of Obama for setting a date for closing the detainee facility at Guantanamo Bay. And he said Obama should speak out more in support of protesters in Iran. McCain appeared Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation."

DEATHS

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Learning the art of the kiln

■ HCC students construct kiln while building skills

by Anna Kurth
Staff Writer

HIBBING — Hibbing Community College art students stepped outside of the classroom and got down to some hard labor last week.

The students worked to cut and place bricks to build a seven-foot tall soda kiln.

A class of about seven ceramic students worked with visiting instructor Curtis Hoard this summer to build the kiln, which will be used by the college.

The class leaves students with kiln-building knowledge and the college with a new kiln, Hoard said.

The soda kiln complements the college's one aging kiln, said Daryn Lowman, HCC instructor.

The college's kiln is 20 years old and having a second kiln to handle some firings will increase its life-span, he said.

In a soda kiln, sodium turns into a sodium bicarbonate gas and circulates through the kiln to form a skin of glass on the clay being fired, Hoard said.

"It's conceivable that you wouldn't even put a glaze on a piece if you didn't want to because the process is self-glazing," he said.

The exciting aspect of a soda kiln is that ceramics fired in it look different every time. The gas will circulate differently through the kiln depending on how the items are stacked in the kiln because the pieces look different depending on much gas hits each one, Hoard said.



Anna Kurth
Jered Dodson and Don Hedman work on building a soda kiln last week at Hibbing Community College.

Artists can use a soda kiln for any type of ceramics they make depending on how they want the piece to look, he said.

The kiln will sit in a small shed next to the ceramics building at the college for students to use throughout much of the year.

However, last week the kiln itself

was the class, and students eagerly learned a craft that could save them thousands of dollars when they seek to own a kiln someday, Hoard said.

He is well versed in the art of kiln building. Hoard taught for 42 years at the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities. Every three years

he taught his students the art of kiln building, he said.

It's good knowledge for an artist to have, he said.

Ceramics artists will build kilns if they have the knowledge because most people who are in the arts don't have the money to buy them, he said.

The material to build the soda kiln is \$6,000 whereas a commercially-built soda kiln costs at least \$18,000, he said.

Hoard said the skills he's teaching to students in building the soda kiln they will be able to transfer into building other kilns someday.

Much of the building process is the same aside from little nuances that each kiln will demand, he said.

"It doesn't make any difference whether they're building a soda kiln or a reduction kiln as long as they have the experience of building," he said. "... When they get the experience of building then they can take that experience and build other kilns, and that's huge."

The students learned Monday why it's essential to get hands on when learning to build. The project ran into an early snag as students were building the floor of the kiln.

The students used firebrick and insulation bricks to build the kiln in a sprung arch style. The weight of the kiln is supported by angle irons, Hoard said.

The first day of building they needed to cut bricks to build the floor, but as Scott Bossert cut into

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Shutting down... and restarting

■ How Hibbing's techno trash gets recycled

by Matt Nelson
HDT Intern

HIBBING — Computers and cell phones may be technological wonders, but when they stop working, they're just another piece of trash.

Or are they? Minnesota state laws prohibit the casual disposal of both cell phones and computers and encourage recycling of the electronic devices. Fortunately, there are many programs in Hibbing that offer recycling at little or no cost.

"Anything with heavy metals — lithium or cadmium — is banned from being put in the trash," said Mary McReynolds, a solid waste planner for St. Louis County. Lithium and cadmium are found in rechargeable cell phone batteries.

Ruth Holm, of Hibbing, collects old cell phones and sends them to an organization called Cell Phones for Soldiers. The organization strips the phones and sells the parts, using the money to buy calling cards for soldiers in war zones.

Holm can only take phones that still have a battery. She has two boxes set up in Hibbing — one at Kens A-1 Auto and Tow Service, and another at Sammy's Pizza. Sammy's Pizza offers

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Matt Nelson

Computers are considered electronic waste in Minnesota, and cannot be disposed of in the manner seen in this photo. However, there are a variety of options available for those needing to unload some technological trash.

Minnesota to write schools IOUs

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — There's no band anymore at Nashwauk-Keewatin Schools. Art and music classes are history, too. Almost a quarter of the teachers were laid off to fix a deficit.

Now to keep the state's books in order, Gov. Tim Pawlenty is delaying part of an aid payment the district was due to get. Superintendent Mark Adams figures Nashwauk-Keewatin will pay as much as \$30,000 in interest to borrow money while it waits for the state funding that the district leader said would have been enough to reinstate a part-time art or music teacher.

"Those are the types of people that you'd want to bring back," Adams said.

Pawlenty is balancing Minnesota's budget by holding back nearly \$1.8 billion in payments to schools. They're supposed to get that por-

tion after the upcoming school year ends, forcing them to dip into reserves or borrow to tide them over. No one has said how soon districts will get all the money they are expecting.

It's a budget-balancing trick the state has used before in bad economic times and spent years correcting when the times turned good. But schools can't give out IOUs for payroll, electric bills, food service and supplies even if state money is slow to arrive.

For most districts, the move will mean borrowing money because they don't have enough funds in the bank, said Scott Croonquist, who heads the Association of Metropolitan School Districts. The expense of interest will come on top of a lackluster outcome from the legislative session: Schools escaped outright cuts for the next two years, but they won't get any-

thing extra to keep up with inflation. Districts across the state have laid off thousands of teachers in recent years.

State Department of Education experts told lawmakers last week that the delay will cost schools, requiring them to pay interest on short-term loans or eating into interest they could have earned on rainy-day funds. Finance Director Tom Melcher said he couldn't estimate the overall cost or say whether more layoffs would result.

"There will be some revenue lost," he said flatly.

Students will find fewer teachers and bigger classes when they go back in September, said Tom Doohar, president of the Education Minnesota teachers union.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Democratic-controlled Legislature raised doubts about whether Pawlenty, a Republican, has the authority to

come through with the late payment. They contend legislative action will be needed if schools are to get all their money. But that might be difficult.

"Someday someone maybe potentially could repay it if we have the money," said Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller, a Minneapolis Democrat.

School officials said they expect to get the money back eventually, but that could be years from now.

"They'll give it back to us whenever they darn well please," said Irv Peterson, who retired Wednesday as Thief River Falls' superintendent.

Peterson said that district will absorb the delay through a mix of savings and borrowing. His schools have cut positions as teachers have retired and reduced travel for sports teams, speech, music and other

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Learning: Kiln is important to ceramics

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his first pale brick, the blade didn't want to cut.

Hoard came over and discovered the machine was equipped with a blade designed to cut steel not masonry bricks.

"Its little things like this that set the whole process back," he said.

The problem was soon remedied when Lowman went to the store to buy a masonry blade.

"When I went to school there were no classes like this so I had to learn to build kilns by trial and error and there was a lot of error along the way," Hoard said. "There's just a lot more

information available now which is great to be a student."

Bossert said he is taking the class because he wants to learn as much about ceramics as possible and to learn how to build a kiln in case he ever wants one of his own, he said.

Students will get a chance to learn about ceramics as well as kiln building. Only about two weeks of the month-long class was taken up with building the kiln, Lowman said.

The rest of the time students will spend in the studio designing artwork, he said.

"Everyone will leave here

with work that they fired in the kiln," he said.

While much of an artist's time is spent in the studio thinking about the design process, the kiln is an important part of the ceramics, he said.

"Without a kiln you don't have ceramics," Lowman said. "It's the final voice and you have to have it. ... This will show people just how important the kiln is to the process."

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Shutting: Be sure to check local rules

From Page 1A

a deal for those seeking to unload their texting tool; one phone equals \$2 off a family or large-size pizza.

Woodland Wireless, the local Verizon Wireless store, also provides a recycling service for cell phones at no cost. A company in Boulder, Colo., provides the store with shipping labels for used phones, according to John Kinnunen, co-owner of Woodland Wireless.

Computers are different than cell phones.

"Computers are considered electronic waste," said McReynolds.

Many old computers have cathode ray tubes (CRTs) inside of them, which are banned from landfills. The glass screens on CRT devices often have lead inside of them, which also has to be properly disposed of.

St. Louis County has a recycling program for cov-

ered electronic devices (CEDs), which include computers, DVD players, VCRs, printers and television sets. There are 10 sites around the county, including one in Hibbing, where people can drop off their equipment for the nominal fee of \$1 or \$2.

"Basically anything with a screen can go through the recycling program for electronics," McReynolds said.

Last year, approximately 165,132 pounds of CEDs were collected and recycled through Hibbing's site alone, according to Terry Soderberg, deputy director of St. Louis County's Environmental Services. A total of 572, 266 pounds of CED waste was collected across the county.

The devices are recycled by stripping them of parts and grinding up the leaded glass, which Soderberg said is shipped to Third World countries, where new CRT devices are produced.

Some computer owners

may be hesitant about recycling their hard drives, particularly if they contain personal information such as banking, passwords or user names. CR Computers in Hibbing provides a service in which they will wipe all data for free.

"We destroy the data so it isn't getting seen by anyone else," said Brian Campbell, owner of CR Computers. They can then recycle the hard drives for free, but do not take printers or monitors.

The city of Hibbing also provides a pick-up service for TVs, computer monitors and other video display devices. According to the city Web site, a person only needs to place the item as near as possible to the regular garbage pick-up point curbside or alley. A \$12 tag needs to be attached to each device. The tags can be purchased from the clerk's office in city hall.

Minnesota: Late payment will hurt some

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extracurricular activities.

Not all schools are worried.

In suburban St. Paul, Roseville Area Schools finance manager Barb Anderson said the district will borrow to cover the delayed state payment but interest rates are low. She said the delay is "not a huge factor."

Elk River Superintendent Mark Bezek said his district is coping with the delay and may not have to borrow money at all if federal stimulus funds come through quickly enough.

Still, he said it adds stress

to an already stressed system.

"We'd like not to see that, but it is what it is and we'll deal with it," Bezek said.

Foreclosures have cut into growth in the once burgeoning area about 35 miles northwest of Minneapolis, and Elk River schools have cut teachers and will rearrange bus schedules and starting times to save money. The district already has debts to worry about to pay off new buildings that went up as the area grew.

The Education Department's Melcher said the most financially stressed schools will get a larger share of their state aid on

time than the others.

But the picture is still gloomy in Greater Minnesota districts like Nashwauck-Keewatin on the Iron Range and Fergus Falls, near the North Dakota border.

Fergus Falls Superintendent Jerry Ness said his district will have to borrow about \$2 million more than usual this year, requiring interest payments that will siphon cash from other priorities. That's on top of layoffs and inflation.

The payment delay "comes on top of pain already," said Ness.

Even so, he reasoned, it's better late than never.

Obama's own party worried health plan lacks votes

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Republican senator seeking a bipartisan health deal spoke Sunday of "dialing down" expectations while one of President Barack Obama's Democratic allies questioned whether the White House had the votes necessary for a such a costly and comprehensive plan during a recession.

Obama's proposal to provide health insurance for some 50 million Americans who lack it has become a contentious point for a Democratic-controlled House and Senate struggling to reach a consensus Obama desperately wants.

Much of the concern came after the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that the plan would cost \$1 trillion over 10 years but cover only about one-third of those now lacking health insurance. Democrats protested that the estimate overlooked important money-savers to be added later. But Republicans seized on the costly projection and the bill's half-finished nature, throwing Democratic leaders on the defensive.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, the top Republican on the Finance Committee, said officials would have to rethink their best-case scenario for providing a sweeping overhaul of the health care system at a relatively low price.

"So we're in the position of dialing down some of our expectations to get the costs down so that it's affordable and, most importantly, so that it's paid for because we can't go to the point where we are now of not paying for something when we have trillions of dollars of debt," said Grassley, R-Iowa.

"And we anticipate paying for it through some savings and Medicare, and from some increases in revenue," he said.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said she wasn't certain there are enough votes in the president's own party to support the proposal.

"I think there's a lot of concern in the Democratic caucus," she said.

The overhaul's chief proponent in the Senate, Chris Dodd of Connecticut, urged patience as lawmakers continued working on the bill. However, Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said the bill's cost was problematic.

"You do the math," McCain said. "It comes up to \$3 trillion. And so far, we have no proposal for having to pay for it."

The CBO estimates "were a death blow to a government-run health care plan," Graham said. "The Finance Committee has abandoned that. We do need to deal with inflation in health care, private and public inflation, but we're not going to go down to the government-owning-health-care road in America and I think that's the story of this week. There's been a bipartisan rejection of that."

Competing plans abound in Congress, complicating Obama's task.

"As a matter of fact, I don't have the slightest idea what is in either of the two bills in the committees," said Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind. "None of us do because much of it hasn't been written, still being drafted. People are scoring something that doesn't exist. What I would suggest is we hang on now for a period of study so that we find literally what the alternatives are."

Fed unlikely to launch new efforts to aid economy

WASHINGTON — With the recession easing, Federal Reserve policymakers are unlikely to launch any major new efforts to revive the economy when they meet this week. Instead, Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues, wary of overdoing the stimulus medicine and fanning inflation later, are expected to stand pat, economists say.

The Fed has taken unprecedented steps to try to lift the country out of recession. They include a bold effort announced in March to plow \$1.2 trillion into the economy in an attempt to lower interest rates and spur more spending by Americans.

"There are a lot of good signs that an economic recovery could get under way later this year, and with inflation currently low, the Fed for now has the luxury of sitting back and watching this recovery unfold," said John Silvia, chief economist at Wachovia.

Home sales have firmed, housing construction posted a gain last month, layoffs are slowing and consumer spending is showing signs of stabilizing.

When they open a two-day meeting Tuesday, Fed policymakers are widely expected to hold a key lending rate to banks at a record low near zero and repeat a pledge to hold rates there for "an extended period." Most economists say that means the Fed will keep its targeted range for its bank lending rate between zero and 0.25 percent through the rest of this year and probably into part of next year to help brace the economy.

Analysts generally think the economy in the current

April-to-June quarter is still declining — perhaps at a pace of 1 percent to 3 percent — but not nearly as much as it had been. The economy sank at a 6.3 percent rate in the final quarter of 2008 and at a 5.7 percent pace in the first quarter this year. It was the worst six-month performance in 50 years.

Bernanke has predicted the recession will end later this year. Some economists say the economy will start growing again as soon as the July-to-September quarter as the Fed's actions so far, along with the federal stimulus of tax cuts and increased government spending, take hold.

Risks to the outlook, however, abound.

Some economists and Wall Street investors have worried that a recent run-up in rates on mortgages and Treasury securities, if prolonged, could choke off prospects for an economic recovery. Some of those fears were eased last week, when rates on 30-year mortgages dipped to 5.38 percent after a string of weekly increases.

Earlier this month, Bernanke said higher rates on mortgages and longer-term Treasury securities seemed to reflect worries about the United States' huge budget deficits, as well as optimism about the economy. He said it also signaled a gradual shift by investors away from the safe haven of U.S. bonds, reversing a pattern seen in the depths of the recession.

It's possible the Fed could decide this week to boost its purchases of mortgage-backed securities and government debt, to try to drive down rates on mortgages

and other consumer debt. Most analysts doubt that will happen, but economists predict the Fed will leave the door open to further action if economic conditions were to deteriorate.

"Some Fed members worry additional action could be counterproductive and actually push long-term interest rates higher because investors will fear that the Fed's actions could lead to runaway inflation down the road," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com.

"Others think the recent rise is just a normalization of rates, reflecting investors' beliefs that the economy is heading in the right direction and that the rise won't do significant damage."

Rising unemployment, tanking home values and cracked nest eggs could force consumers to go back into hibernation again. Economists don't think that will happen, but they can't rule it out, either.

Even after the recession ends, the recovery is likely to be tepid. The nation's unemployment rate — now at 9.4 percent — is expected to keep climbing into 2010 and to hit 10 percent this year. Some say it could rise as high as 10.7 percent or 11 percent by the summer of next year before it starts to decline. The highest rate since World War II was 10.8 percent at the end of 1982.

"The Fed has to walk a fine line right now" to make investors and the public feel confident policymakers will administer the right dose of medicine to heal the economy but not so much as to cause an overdose, said Richard Yamarone, economist at Argus Research.

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