

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SPEAKER: One, two, three, four.

TIM NELSON: It's *Minnesota Now*. I'm Tim Nelson in for Cathy Wurzer. A Minnesota appeals court has ruled against a group of Twin Cities parents in a school segregation case. We'll hear more about the decision and what it means for Minnesota schools. And watch out for baby turtles. It's high turtle crossing season and the Minneapolis Parks Board wants to know if you spot them. We'll learn more.

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And Paul Huttner is back. We'll hear more about Florida as we follow the path of Hurricane Ian. Thousands of runners are gearing up for the big Twin Cities Marathon this Sunday. We'll get details on the 40th running. And I'll talk to Vikings wide receiver Blake Proehl about his devastating injury and his unexpected foray into the music world. All that plus the song of the day in the Minnesota Music Minute, right after the news.

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LAKSHMI SINGH: Live from MPR News in Washington, I'm Lakshmi Singh. The outer wall of Hurricane Ian has reached Sanibel and Captiva islands in Florida's Lee County. Webcams show roads washed out by floodwaters. Conditions will quickly get worse as the hurricane moves onshore. It's expected to do so as a category four.

The hurricane slowed to nine miles per hour. A slower storm allows more time for powerful winds, heavy rainfall, and floods to cause widespread damage. Ian's forecast to push a storm surge as high as eighteen feet in some areas. Here's MPR's Greg Allen.

GREG ALLEN: Hurricane Ian's greatest impact is expected to be in the Fort Myers and Sarasota areas, but it's a massive storm that will down trees, power lines, and cellular phone towers as it moves inland. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis says millions of Floridians can expect to lose power. In some areas with infrastructure damage, he says it may take time to get the lights back on. After Ian makes landfall, he says, search and rescue teams are ready to respond.

RON DESANTIS: Whether it's ground, water, air, all different types of ways to go in and help people. That's going to commence immediately upon this storm hitting.

GREG ALLEN: DeSantis says Hurricane Ian's destruction is likely to be so great, it will take the region and Florida years to recover. Greg Allen, MPR News, Saint Petersburg.

LAKSHMI SINGH: The US think tank, the Institute for the Study of War, says results of the Kremlin-ordered referendums in parts of Ukraine are preordained and implausible. MPR's Kat Lonsdorf reports a think tank is a warning Ukrainians could be forced into the Russian military fight.

KAT LONSDORF: The report finds Russian officials are setting conditions for conscription of Ukrainian civilians in the areas where the sham referendums were held. Those areas will likely be annexed soon, much like Crimea in 2014. Russian President, Vladimir Putin, recently announced the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of Russians. If the Ukrainian areas are annexed, it's likely the Kremlin will claim residents there are now considered Russian and part of those mobilization efforts. The report also says there's evidence of newly mobilized Russian troops being sent to the front lines with little to no training. Kat Lonsdorf, MPR News, Dnipro, Ukraine.

LAKSHMI SINGH: President Biden is hosting the first White House conference in more than 50 years targeting hunger in the United States.

JOE BIDEN: Global inflation and Putin's war in Ukraine have sparked global food crisis. So just last week at the United Nations, I talked about commitments we were making to tackle food insecurity worldwide. Because in every country in the world, in every state in this country, no matter what else divides us, if a parent cannot feed a child, there's nothing else that matters to that parent.

LAKSHMI SINGH: The administration says with the help of the private sector, it hopes to end food insecurity in this country by the end of this decade. It appears rescuers in Nepal have recovered the body of US extreme skier, Hilary Nelson. The year 49-year-old from Colorado went missing Monday as she skied down from the more than 26,000-foot summit of Mount Manaslu and fell off the mountain. You're listening to MPR news.

A deadly gun battle erupted during an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank. From Tel Aviv, MPR's Daniel Estrine reports that Palestinian officials say Israeli troops killed at least four Palestinians.

DANIEL ESTRINE: This has been the most violent year in the West Bank in several years, as Israel has carried out nearly daily raids to apprehend Palestinians suspected of militant activity. There have been numerous Palestinian shootings toward Israeli troops, and troops have killed a high number of Palestinians-- mostly gunmen but some civilians too. In the latest gun battle, the Israeli army says it raided the Jenin refugee camp and ordered two militants to surrender, but they fired the troops, and the troops killed them. A third man Israeli troops killed was a member of the Palestinian security forces who opened fire. The circumstances of the fourth Palestinian killed are unclear. Daniel Estrine, MPR News, Tel Aviv.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Women across Italy are expected to stage rallies this evening in defense of abortion rights as the country prepares to usher in its first far right dominated government since World War II. The leader of the Brothers of Italy party, Giorgia Meloni, is poised to become Italy's first female premier. Meloni said before the recent parliamentary election that she would respect abortion rights. Critics, including lawmakers who recently lost races to far right candidates, say they're worried Meloni will take the country in a more conservative direction to the detriment of abortion rights in Italy. At last check on Wall Street, the Dow Jones Industrial average up 460 points or one and a half percent. This is MPR News.

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JOHN WANAMAKER: For MPR News in the Twin Cities, I'm John Wanamaker. Ramsey County elections officials are asking the state Supreme Court to step in after the name of a recently deceased Republican candidate was printed on ballots for a St. Paul state house race. Matt Sepic has more.

MATT SEPIC: After the death of GOP candidate, Beverly Petersen, Minnesota Republicans nominated Scott Hesselgrave to run in House District 67A on St. Paul's East side. Ramsey County elections officials say the Secretary of State's office notified them of the change, August 29, but the County says because of a clerical error, Peterson's name was sent to the printer. Staff discovered the problem on Friday, the first day of early voting. Under state law, only the Minnesota Supreme Court has the authority to fix such mistakes, and officials filed a petition asking the justices to sort it out. But until there's a resolution, the County must continue to issue the erroneous ballots. Hesselgrave is facing DFL Liz Lee in the race. Lee beat DFL incumbent, John Thompson, in the August primary. I'm Matt Sepic.

JOHN WANAMAHER: Becker County authorities say they found two people dead in a home after a call for help yesterday. Authorities received a call just after 9:00 AM, asking for law enforcement to respond to a house on County Highway 6, South of the city of Detroit Lakes. Deputies and Detroit Lakes police found a man, a woman, and two dogs dead in the home. They were not identified, and authorities did not offer any details on the nature of the deaths. The Becker County Sheriff's Office says it believes the incident is isolated and that there is no ongoing threat to public safety.

The Walker Art Center and MPR News sister station, the Currents Today, announced that they're ending the annual Rock the Garden music festival in Minneapolis. A joint statement released by the Current and the Walker said they're grateful to go out on a high note following this past June's festival, which featured Slater Kenny, Nathaniel Rateliff, and Duluth-based Lowe. The statement didn't elaborate on reasons for the decision. It said ending Rock the Garden provides a chance to develop new events and possibly new collaborations between MPR and the Arts Center. The Walker launched Rock the Garden back in 1998. It went on hiatus in 2004. The Current partnered to relaunch the festival in 2008. The 2020 and 2021 events were canceled due to the pandemic. This is MPR News.

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TIM NELSON: Good afternoon. This is Minnesota Now. I'm Tim Nelson. This week, the fight against school segregation in Minnesota took a turn when a Minnesota appeals court ruled against a group of Twin Cities parents. Those parents say class and racial segregation in Minnesota schools is violating the state's constitutional obligation to educate all students adequately. To dig into the details of their argument and what the court said, I'm joined by Beth Hawkins. She is senior writer and national correspondent with the online education newspaper, *The 74*. Thanks for being here, Beth. Well, we'll get her on here in a second.

Let's take a minute to check on the weather now. It's 52 degrees in St. Paul. We're inching up toward a high of 61 degrees. It's 51 in St. Cloud, 55 in Morris, and 52 in Worthington. I understand Beth is with us here. So highs will be in the-- highs will be in the 60s today in Southern and Western Minnesota and in the 50s in Northeastern Minnesota. I guess-- I wonder if you've turned on your heater yet. Last night was pretty cold. We woke up with some frost this morning. MPR News asked Minnesotans on Twitter when they give in and finally turn on the heat. Jean said the annual plan is no heat or furnace from April 15 until October 15. Just started closing the windows at night this week, brrr. Kate tweeted, whenever my landlord turns it on, I guess. Fair enough. So Beth Hawkins-- the National correspondent and senior writer with the online education newspaper, *The 74*, joins us again. Thanks for being here, Beth.

BETH HAWKINS: Hi, Tim. Glad to be here.

TIM NELSON: So Minnesota's Constitution promises an adequate education to all students. What do these parents-- how do they say schools are falling short?

BETH HAWKINS: So in 2015, a group of Twin Cities parents sued an array of state officials, claiming that the fact that there were large and persistent racial imbalances in their schools denied them an adequate education. That some of the problems that attend to concentrations of poverty were standing in the way of their children's academic and social success.

TIM NELSON: And how-- are they looking at test results or grades? How do they measure that?

BETH HAWKINS: So I do think that they are looking at test results. They're looking at other factors, such as academic growth. They're looking at attendance. I'm not sure that these plaintiffs have drilled down on the individual performance of individual schools so much as they say that there is a pattern. There's a persistent pattern of their children being shunted into schools that are under-resourced, that have teachers who are less qualified, that have fewer resources to serve their kids, worse facilities, and so forth.

TIM NELSON: And what did the court rule in this latest ruling?

BETH HAWKINS: So this ruling is both very narrow and also very important. What the court ruled was that the fact that there are racially imbalanced schools-- and that's an important term to hang on to. Racially imbalanced does not by itself in the absence of an intent on the part of any part of the state to segregate children by race constitute a violation of the state Constitution and its education adequacy clause, which you cited earlier. So what the state would have to have put into place-- a policy that intended to keep children separated if it were to all on its own constitute a violation of the Constitution.

TIM NELSON: So in your coverage of this, you have delineated between imbalance and segregation? Are they saying that this is OK that segregation as the parents are alleging is OK?

BETH HAWKINS: I don't think that they're saying that at all. I think one of the questions that will be decided either now as an appeal goes to the Supreme Court, which the attorneys for the plaintiffs vowed within hours of the decision coming down Monday-- or it will be decided at trial-- is what constitutes segregation. Some of the defendants have argued that segregation is the practice of excluding someone from a school or other public facility, neighborhood, et cetera, because of their race or other demographic group. And that if students choose-- families choose to enroll their children in a school that appeals to students of a particular race or ethnicity for whatever reason, that that's not segregation. Those schools may be racially imbalanced. They may serve almost virtually entirely students of color, but since no one's excluded under law or in practice, it's not segregation.

TIM NELSON: So you talked about choosing schools. Obviously, in Minnesota, a leader in charter schools, are they involved in this case?

BETH HAWKINS: Yes. So those are the defendants that I was talking about. Very shortly after the suit was filed in 2015, a handful of very high performing Minnesota charter schools, which are publicly funded but independently managed schools, asked the court for permission to join the suit. Because one of the things that the suit sought was to extend the state's desegregation rules to them. And what the charter schools said was they're not currently turning away anybody on the basis of race or ethnicity. They under law, like any other Minnesota school are obliged to accept all comers.

So the schools that wanted to participate in the suit and are participating in the suit-- two of them-- enroll almost exclusively children of a single race or ethnicity. There's a school in St. Paul that's almost all East African children and a school in Minneapolis that's 90% or more Black children, and they're very, very high performing. And what those schools have argued is that if a white child or a Latino child wants to apply and to enter the school, they're more than welcome, but that they have struck on a formula that affirms their students' cultures and celebrates their background, and that that is translated into high academic results. And that in fact those students are not being denied an adequate education. They're getting a superior education for them.

TIM NELSON: So you said that this court-- this case has been winding through the courts for quite a while. Obviously, this is an appeals court decision-- a stop along the way here. What's next? How does this workout?

BETH HAWKINS: Yeah. So this one just goes back and forth between the trial court and various appeals court. What will happen now is that the plaintiffs will appeal to the state Supreme Court, which has already heard a separate question in the same suit-- heard a separate question in the suit in 2018. The Supreme Court will either decide to take up the question about whether racial imbalance in schools on its face is a violation of the state Constitution, or it will decline to answer that question. In which case, it goes back to the trial court, where I believe things are done except for a trial. I believe the next stage is discovery, the finding of evidence, the pre-interviewing of witnesses, and so forth would go forth.

TIM NELSON: Well, we look forward to your coverage of those developments. Thank you so much, Beth.

BETH HAWKINS: Thank you, Tim. Bye-bye.

TIM NELSON: Bye. Beth Hawkins is a senior writer and national correspondent for *The 74*. It's an online education outlet. She's based in Minneapolis.

[MUSIC - AMANDA GRACE, "RAYNE ANGEL"]

AMANDA GRACE: (SINGING) Met your girl in California. In a town dried up inside. When you heard my man singing to you, he said those aren't tears in my eyes.

TIM NELSON: It's our Minnesota Music Minute. This is Minnesota-based musician, Amanda Grace, with the song, Rayne Angel, which is the title track off her album of the same name released in June, 2020.

AMANDA GRACE: (SINGING) --ashes lining scenes there once was life. Don't know the pain. You're feeling lovely. Flames are meant to purify. God will give you love too, love. Do what you can. Give to others what you did. You did not get yourself, yeah. [INAUDIBLE].

TIM NELSON: Thanks for listening to *Minnesota Now*. I'm Tim Nelson. Fall is associated with a lot of things-- turning leaves, colder temperatures, a little bit of frost like we saw up North. But what you might not think about-- baby turtles. And right now is high turtle crossing season. Why? We're going to ask MaryLynn Pulscher. She's the Minneapolis Park and Recreation board's manager for Environmental Education and Youth Employment. Welcome to *Minnesota Now*, MaryLynn.

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: Thanks, Tim. Good to be here.

TIM NELSON: So a lot of people think about baby animals in the spring, but I guess baby turtles are out and about in the fall. What's going on?

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: So turtles really come ashore in early summer, and this year was a little bit later, because we had kind of funky weather as we all know. They come ashore. They dig a nest, lay eggs, and they walk away. And later in the fall, most of the turtle hatchlings will emerge, and then they-- a lot of them need to cross the road again-- that happens all over-- and get back to the water. And so this year, the turtle hatch happened a little bit later, so we're hoping everybody is still keeping an eye out for these very, very small little snapping turtles and painted turtles as they cross the road maybe from over a parkway, getting back to a wetland, or a lake or something like that.

TIM NELSON: So you said they're going back to the water. Do they spend the winter underwater?

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: Yeah. So then they are in the lake over the winter, but we definitely have-- some turtle hatchlings will make the decision to just wait it out they may have hatched out of their egg, but based on temperature and if it's like too dry-- it's better if it's moist and warm. Then they're more interested in moving. So they actually can also stay in over winter in their nest. So that's something that I actually learned new this year with this research project that we're doing with a local ecologist, Jenny Winkelman, and that was something I was not aware of until this year.

TIM NELSON: So how long are they on the move? When are they-- when should we be watching out for them?

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: So a lot of them are on the move in September. And of course, we've had this kind of major temperature drop, so we're probably at the very last ones who nested late. We definitely want people to continue to keep an eye out for another week or two at least. And there are nests that we know that are on the shoreline, like softshell turtles that have been in beach exposure areas. There those hatchlings have not emerged yet, so we're keeping an eye on those turtles as well.

TIM NELSON: I've seen the turtle crossing signs in Minneapolis just out and about. If you see one there, what should you do? Do you get out and help them cross? Do you stop and wait?

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: Yes, so you can stop and wait. But if there's-- of course, never put yourself in any danger. Keep an eye out, and whatever direction the turtle is going, we want you to help the turtle continue to go the same way. This time of year, they're going to be heading towards water. Be careful how you pick them up. It is mostly going to be smaller ones at this point. But if there are adults that are moving to some place that they're going to spend the winter, maybe if they're moving from a wetland to a lake, you have to be careful how you pick them up and move them from the shell.

Don't pick them up by the tail or anything like that. They look indestructible, but they're not. And if you happen to see an injured turtle-- like a turtle that's been hit by a car-- you can take it to the wildlife rehab center. They can do amazing things with repairing cracked shells and that kind of thing. But really keeping an eye out for adults, spring and fall, is super important, because female turtles are the ones that are mostly on the move, and they really don't start to lay eggs till they're 10, 14 years old. And if you kill an adult female, you've really set back the population, so it's really important to keep an eye out for them and be good to turtles.

TIM NELSON: I think some people may also be tempted to pick one up and take it home.

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: Do not take it home. Do not take it home. We want you-- they're cute. They're charming. Everybody loves turtles, but we really want you to leave wild turtles where they are. We need that population to stay put. And if you are someone who has a red slider turtle-- something that you bought at a pet store-- those are not native Minnesota turtle, and so don't ever release those out of your aquarium into any of our water bodies as well. If you want to rehome it-- you're tired of your red slider turtle-- you can contact a pet store or the herp society, and they can help you find a new home for it, but please do not release it into the wild.

TIM NELSON: Now, you talked a little bit about a program you've got going on. I understand a research program, and it's been going for a couple of years here-- collecting these turtle sightings. Tell me a little bit more of how it works.

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: Sure thing. So we just completed year two of this research, and we're really reliant on the people who use the Minneapolis Park system or just out in Minneapolis in general. We've got an app called Report a Turtle. And what we're really looking for is people to document their sightings. Where have you seen a turtle in the Park system? Tell us what they're doing. If you can identify the species, great. But we would like to know if the turtle is dead or alive. We'd like to know if they're alive.

Are they basking in the sun? Are they crossing a road? Are they nesting? Are they swimming? What are they doing? So we can start to identify where we have turtles in the park system-- places that we should do a better job of providing protection, improving their habitat. And we're also interested in where people are finding dead turtles, because those would be hot zones. We can take the time to alter maybe how we do parkways, providing curb cuts, so it's a little easier for a hatchling to get up and over that steep curve. And really be able to draw attention to those locations for drivers, walkers, bikers, and have it be something seasonal that we can pop the signs up and down so people are really aware and can be careful during that time.

And the exciting thing about this is really for like citizen, resident participation. The first year that we did this, we had about 100 people who took the time to come complete the app, do the reporting, and this year we had more than 500 people who actually turned in reports about turtles, and that's just really exciting for mapping to see what's going on in the lakes, the ponds. If anybody lives near the Mississippi River, we're really interested in getting more people who are out walking and see turtles in that location.

TIM NELSON: Little citizen science there.

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: It's citizen science. We need you. We definitely need you.

TIM NELSON: And how does this actually work? I mean, where do they go to actually make this report?

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: So if you go to the Minneapolis Park Board website, which is MinneapolisParks.org, and you just type in a keyword of turtles, it'll take you to a page that has a little bit.ly. And actually could do it bit.ly/reportturtle. And you will get into this just very easy to use app. You can actually put a dot on the map and show us exactly where the turtle was. You can try and help identify which kind of turtle it is as well. We mostly have snapping turtles, painted, and softshell turtles in the Minneapolis Park system, but there may be map turtles in a few others that we just love to know where those populations are. And we record the information, and then we start sorting it out and doing mapping. And we're hoping to have our reports up on our website with more information about turtles in the next few weeks.

TIM NELSON: And do you have to know what kind of turtle you're looking at? You talked a little bit about the not red painted turtles, obviously, but what's out there?

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: Well, you don't have to know what they are. You could definitely Google it yourself and see if you can figure it out, but even the description of, hey, it looked-- oh, smooth shell turtles or softshell turtles, they look very prehistoric kind of leathery shelled. Look very atypical. People are always very excited to see them. Snapping turtles are the ones that bite and look a little more fierce than they-- they're an adult. They've been in the water, and they look really craggy, and they've got like-- oh-- things growing out in their shells. They look green and a little more embedded. And painted turtles are more those classic ones that you see that are out basking a lot in the park system. So you don't have to know what kind of turtle it is. It's OK to say don't know. That's just fine. But just--

TIM NELSON: Fantastic.

MARYLYNN PULSCHER: --knowing where they are makes a huge difference. And this past year, we did a turtle disclosure over at [INAUDIBLE], which is providing fencing on a certain part of the beach so that the softshell turtles could have a protected area to lay eggs. And that's been really exciting to see there. And over at Lake Harriet, we have another one, and those turtles are finding that spot. And the amazing thing is they will remember that they had success here, and they will come back again and again. So the research in other states shows that's possible. It's really cool.

TIM NELSON: Great. Well, thanks for the turtle tutorial, MaryLynn. MaryLynn Pulscher is the Minneapolis Park and recreation board's manager for environmental education and youth employment.

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TIM NELSON: And it's another chilly day out there. A little frosty this morning. It's 52 in the Twin Cities right now, but at least it's sunny. I see a few clouds out there. It's 45 degrees in St. Cloud. 52 in Fergus Falls. In Worthington, it's 48, and in International Falls, it's 44. Highs are going to be in the 50s in Northeastern Minnesota, in the 60s in Central and Southern parts of the state, and of course, we're watching the situation in Florida with Hurricane Ian. It landed on Florida's Southwest coast this morning. Storm surges and intense amounts of rainfall are expected, and residents are being told to evacuate. Storm is moving Northeast at 9 miles an hour, very slowly. If you're currently being impacted by the storm, MPR wants to hear from you. Send us an email at MinnesotaNow@mprnews.org. We'll have more on the weather and hurricane Ian later in the show. We'll hear from Paul Huttner and a Minnesotan familiar to many MPR listeners, now living in Florida. But first, John Wanamaker standing by with the news headlines. Hey, John.

JOHN WANAMAKER: Hey, Tim. As you mentioned, the US National Hurricane Center says Ian's most damaging winds have begun hitting Florida's Southwest coast as the storm's eyewall reaches that area. The Hurricane Center neared-- the hurricane's Center neared Fort Myers today after rapidly intensifying overnight, gaining top winds of 155 miles per hour. That puts Ian just shy of category five status. And the storm pushing a surge that could cause catastrophic damage along the state's heavily populated Gulf Coast. Forecasters say Fort Myers, that region, could see a surge of up to 18 feet. Florida's governor is urging residents in that area to hunker down not enough time now to evacuate but at least 2 and 1/2 million people were ordered to evacuate ahead of the storm.

Russia is poised to formally annex parts of Ukraine after occupied areas held a Kremlin orchestrated referendum-- denounced as illegal and rigged by Kyiv and the West-- to live under Moscow's rule. Armed troops had gone door to door with elections officials to collect ballots in five days of voting. The results were widely ridiculed as implausible and characterized as a land grab by an increasingly cornered Russian leadership and that follows military losses in Ukraine. Russia calling up to 300,000 reservists to fight in the war and warned it could resort to nuclear options. The European Commission president urged the European Union's 27 member countries to impose more sanctions on Russian officials and trade over the sham referendums.

Kyle Young, convicted of assaulting a Capitol Police officer during the January 6 insurrection, has been sentenced to over seven years in prison. It's the longest sentence yet against a Capitol rioter. The 38-year-old Young apologized in court today to Officer Michael Fanone, who suffered serious injuries and had to retire after the incident. European companies are ramping up security around pipelines, and energy prices are climbing again as a suspected sabotage of two pipelines that deliver natural gas from Russia underscored the vulnerability of Europe's energy infrastructure and prompted the EU to warn of possible retaliation. Some European officials and energy experts are saying that likely Russia is to blame for any sabotage while others cautioned against pointing fingers until investigators are able to determine what happened. This is MPR News.

TIM NELSON: And you're listening to *Minnesota Now*. I'm Tim Nelson. As you heard in John's newscast, the Western coast of Florida has seen the eye of Hurricane Ian make landfall in the last couple of hours. This time on Wednesdays, we usually get the Minnesota weather news from our chief meteorologist, Paul Huttner. But today, Paul is a special guest. Paul, thanks for being here.

PAUL HUTTNER: Hey, Tim. My pleasure as always. Thank you, and boy, Ian really intensified overnight as we've been saying. It's now a category four. It's a strong category four-- 155 mile an hour winds. 157 is category five, so it's right on the borderline. And the key elements-- that storm surge 12 to 18 feet along the West Coast of Florida. I'm looking at the eyewall right now. It is near Sanibel and Captiva islands near Fort Myers Port Charlotte, and that's where former MPR and National Weather Service Meteorologist Craig Edwards is. Craig, hello. How are you? I knew we'd talk again soon, but I didn't think it would be during the edge when you're near the eyewall of a category four hurricane.

CRAIG EDWARDS: Yeah, I'd rather swap out a frost advisory for a category four hurricane. But a lot of the TV weathercasters are rooting for that extra 2 miles per hour to get it up to a category five, but as you pointed out, Captiva and Sanibel and up through Cape Coral, and then going [? up ?] to North and Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda. So I never thought, Paul, that I would still have power being 30 miles East of an eye wall of a category four hurricane, but we still have power here in Fort Myers.

PAUL So let's orient people to where you are. You're in Fort Myers. How far are you from the coast? How far are you above sea level? We're talking about that potential for 12 to 18 feet of storm surge. And our first concern, of course, is your safety. So tell us what the conditions are like there now.

CRAIG EDWARDS: Well, we've had reports of winds as high as 112 miles an hour down toward Naples, and I'm sure there are winds there 107 miles an hour, 110 miles an hour along the coast. I am about 20 miles inland. I'm actually East of Interstate 75 on the North side of Fort Myers. So if the storm surge makes it East of 75, we got quite the news story. But you're talking historical surges and up to 12, 18 feet. 18 feet seems a little bit high, but we're in a position out, Paul, with that eyewall so close that once they eye will start moving North, the wraparound on the South Side of that eye is going to push 115 mile an hour winds onto the western coast of Florida, and I think that that's going to be the worst storm surge in the next two hours or so. I'm thinking at my house, we're going to look at about 90 to 95 miles an hour winds about 4 o'clock this afternoon.

PAUL Yeah, and I've already seen a gust over 100 on Captiva Island, Craig, which is about what? 15 miles West of you or so. And I've seen video from Fort Myers closer to the coast of storm surge already into the town up to about the car doors of some cars, so it is happening right near the coast. Let's talk a little bit of hurricane geography, because the bays, the inlets of the West Coast of Florida, they funnel that surge, that water in. You talk about places like Cape Coral, which is not far from you, where there's almost 300,000 people, and they live on canals, and Cape Coral is only about 3 to 6 feet above sea level. I mean, what are you thinking we may see there in the next 24 hours?

CRAIG EDWARDS: Well, they're going to be in bad shape, and it's-- I hate to think of what it's going to look like tomorrow morning. That storm surge is going to be something, and Paul, hurricane forecasting is a difficult thing. And just last Thursday, they were predicting that hurricane would stay out over the open waters, head toward Pensacola. Then they took it toward Tampa, and then about three days ago, everybody was evacuating Tampa, because it was the worst case scenario for the hurricane to enter the state just North of Tampa and drive all that water into the Bay. And then all of a sudden, they said, not so fast. It's headed more toward Sarasota, and then finally they said more toward Punta Gorda and Port Charlotte then more toward Fort Myers. So it was a moving Target. We hoping for a wobble there. We heard-- the forecasters often mention the hurricane eye is wobbling, and I was looking for a wobble the last two hours, and I hadn't seen it.

PAUL Yeah, and it's interesting to note that that's why the National Hurricane Center puts out a forecast cone of uncertainty, because we get those wobbles, those errors. Overall, the forecast has been good. They forecast the West coast of Florida days in advance, but that's why if you're in or near the cone, you need to pay attention because these things can move easily 50 to 100 miles. Craig, another aspect of this storm, the rainfall. We're looking at potentially 10 to 20 inches North of the center. That could be from Tampa all the way up through Orlando, even to Jacksonville. Talk to us a little bit about the geography, the low-lying geography of Florida, and what 10 to 20 inches of rain can do in a period of a day or two.

CRAIG EDWARDS: Well, Paul, it's like dumping a glass of water on the top of a table. There's hardly any slop here in the state, or at least the part that I am in. If you're 20 feet above sea level, you drive 50 miles, and you're still 20 feet above sea level. So that-- I got about three different ways of rain that produced about 6 and 1/2 inches of rain from the storm over my place. And like you mentioned, the heavy rains are going to go from Port Charlotte up toward Tampa, and then even into Orlando and Gainesville. But it looks like Orlando still-- Orlando is even in part of the hurricane warning. Who would have thought Orlando would be in a hurricane warning with heavy rain of up to 10 to 15 inches?

PAUL HUTTNER: Yeah, and finally, Craig, human life of course is the first consideration here. But I've also been looking at some insurance estimates. Companies like CoreLogic who do this kind of calculation as hurricanes come ashore-- there is a lot of expensive real estate on the West Coast of Florida and across the state. They're talking about the potential for \$45 billion worth of damage-- maybe \$250 billion total real estate in that area. Talk to us about the area and how populated it's become over the last 10 or 20 years where you're at.

CRAIG EDWARDS: Well, I think just in the last five years, it's exploded down here. Everybody-- the baby boomers all said I'm tired of the cold and tired of doing the Minnesota hunch. Let's get down to Florida. And they said, the furthest South we get, the better off we are, but that's so in this case-- and the real estate values have gone up. The insurance coverage has gone up. Everything has gone up in regards to cost of living, so it's-- the result of the people wanting to be South and be South during the Cold season-- so the insurance values or insurance rates are going to go-- skyrocket tremendously. I think, with this hurricane, it's going to be quite devastating to some expensive real estate in the Southwest portion of Florida.

PAUL HUTTNER: Well, Craig Edwards, it is such a pleasure to talk with you again. We wish you the most safety riding this out-- the eyewall just a few miles West of you now and will continue to move to the North. Stay safe, my friend, and let's talk again soon after you ride the storm out.

CRAIG EDWARDS: Yeah, let's talk when we have a frost advisory out for [INAUDIBLE] buyers in February. Have a good day, Paul. See you.

PAUL HUTTNER: You too. Thank you, Craig. Tim Nelson, there you go. We've got MPR former meteorologist right near the eyewall of the storm. Incredible to see in this 155-mile-an-hour hurricane.

TIM NELSON: Right. And getting back here to Minnesota, a little nippy here today. How cold did it get?

PAUL HUTTNER: Yeah, 37 this morning at Twin Cities airport. That's the coldest morning in five months since late April-- so those frost advisories verified. Here's the good news. We're going to warm up gradually as we go through the rest of the week. 60s today. We'll be near the 70s, it looks like, by Friday and into the low 70s this weekend. Lots of sunshine. We need some rain, Tim. We don't see any of that in the forecast, but the weather will be pleasant.

TIM NELSON: Yeah, I understand it's been the driest September on record so far.

PAUL HUTTNER: Yeah, we've had less than a quarter of an inch of rain-- 0.23 at Twin Cities airport. So we're still in severe drought from the Twin Cities westward toward the Minnesota River. Northern Minnesota has done well on rainfall this summer, but we're not as widespread or as deep in the drought as we were last year, but we're certainly-- what we need is several good fall rainstorms before we head into the freeze here in November and December.

TIM NELSON: All right. Well, thanks much, Paul. That was--

PAUL My pleasure. Thanks, Tim.

HUTTNER:

TIM NELSON: That was MPR chief meteorologist, Paul Huttner.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

And time for a music break. Today's song comes from our friend Isaac Yenta, who is at 101.1 FM, the River in Winona. What do you have for us today, Isaac?

ISAAC YENTA: Greetings from Winona. I've got one of my favorite Winona music festivals coming up shortly, here, called boats and bluegrass. And I wanted to play one of the bands that I'm really looking forward to seeing there-- them Coulee boys. They're from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and this is a tune off their most recent album called *Namesake*.

[MUSIC - THEM COULEE BOYS, "NAMESAKE"]

(SINGING) Met my grandpa. He was black and white. Few years from his teens. Held my father towards the flashing light, 1963. There's my grandma standing to the side. Got my aunty round her knees only standing about 5 foot, 5. But she seemed so tall to me. And I'm told I have the same face as my namesake. We're all going to the same place we're done. Even if we all ain't got the same names, I'll be proud to call you family sure enough.

Some jump from airplanes. Some ran the family farm. They raised my dad, my mom. They raised me. Some aren't related by words or blood, but they're still your family. And I'm told I have the same face as my namesake. We're all going to the same place when we're done. Even if we all ain't got the same names, I'll be proud to call you family sure enough. I hope I've grown to be my mother by the time I have a son. I hope he takes after my father. I hope they just be who they want. I hope my friends will all surround them like crazy uncles and aunts. I hope they know they don't have to be related to be loved.

It's just love. It's just love. It's just love. It's just love. It's just love. It's just love. It's just love. It's just love. I'm told I have the same face as my namesake. We're all going to the same place when we're done. Even if we all ain't got the same names, I'll be proud to call you family sure enough. And I'm told I have the same face as my namesake. We're all going to the same place when we're done. Even if we all ain't got the same names, I'll be proud to call you family sure enough.

ISAAC YENTA: That's namesake from Eau Claire band, Them Coulee Boys. I'd encourage everyone to check them out, because they play a lot, and they are an absolute treat to see live.

TIM NELSON: Hey, they sure sound like it. Thanks Isaac. That's Isaac Yenta-- a DJ at 101.1 FM, The River in Winona.

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TIM NELSON: It's Minnesota Now. I'm Tim Nelson. So we were just talking about the weather in Florida. Back here in Minnesota, the weather's going to warm up a little back into the 70s by the weekend. But for thousands of people, it's going to be that Sunday morning low they're watching as they get ready to hit the road for the Twin Cities 10 mile and the Twin Cities marathon. Looks like it's going to be clear in about 50. You'd hardly ask for better weather for the 40th running of the marathon this year. Joining me to note the landmark is Virginia Brophy Ackman, the marathon's executive director. Good afternoon.

Well, the phone's not working too well for us today. Anyway, it looks like, as I said, the cold weather for now is temporary. Tomorrow here in the Twin Cities we're going to have another sunny day. It'll be even warmer-- 66 degrees is going to be our high. Then even warmer on Friday-- 70 in the Twin Cities. Good weather for getting outside. Going out to look for those turtles. If you-- I understand Virginia is back on the line with us. Can you hear me, Virginia?

VIRGINIA Hi, good afternoon. How are you?

BROPHY

ACKMAN:

TIM NELSON: Great. So let's roll back the clock here a little bit. Tell me how the Twin Cities marathon start.

VIRGINIA Well, thankfully, back in 1982, there were some very smart people that decided to combine the St. Paul
BROPHY marathon with the City of Lakes marathon. And that is when Twin Cities marathon was established-- so 1982.

ACKMAN:

TIM NELSON: The City of Lakes marathon had been going on for a while before that, right?

VIRGINIA Yeah. Yeah, it had, and actually, I was looking for that this morning. And City of Lakes was in the '70s. And before
BROPHY that, there was actually the Land of Lakes marathon in 1963, so long history of marathons in Minnesota.

ACKMAN:

TIM NELSON: So back in 1982, how many people were there for that first try?

VIRGINIA Well, I was actually surprised. We ended up with over 3,000 finishers, so that tells me that running absolutely
BROPHY was very popular even back then.

ACKMAN:

TIM NELSON: Obviously a lot of people come out to watch it as well. Were there crowds out back then?

VIRGINIA Yeah, you know? Yes. I think there's definitely a lot of people that like to support the marathon, but I would say
BROPHY probably, at least in my tenure, there is for sure-- we know there's 300,000. But certainly, if you think about how
ACKMAN: many family members usually come out and cheer on and just people along the course too, we're so fortunate to have all those homes along the route.

TIM NELSON: And how many are going to be running it this weekend?

VIRGINIA My gosh. We have 20,000 between the marathon and the 10 mile on Sunday.

BROPHY

ACKMAN:

TIM NELSON: Wow.

**VIRGINIA
BROPHY
ACKMAN:** I know.

TIM NELSON: And it's not just a race anymore. It's a phenomenon. Like you said, these people come out. There's a big swath of the Twin Cities that just shuts down. Everybody takes a pause to watch this. What's made it so successful?

**VIRGINIA
BROPHY
ACKMAN:** Well, I think it's a lot-- several things. I think we're fortunate to have an absolutely beautiful course that attracts the runners, which then attracts the spectators. And I think this community is very healthy and moves and appreciates what people do-- the accomplishments that they make on marathon weekend. It's pretty amazing to see so many people realize their goals and their dreams. And I just think we are very fortunate to have a community that wants to come out and see for themselves what it's like to complete 26.2 miles.

TIM NELSON: And I think a lot of people just think about this weekend and think about that achievement on that single day, but the Twin Cities Marathon isn't just the first Sunday of October-- first Sunday of October. You've got events going all around the year now, right?

**VIRGINIA
BROPHY
ACKMAN:** Yeah, we sure do. Twin Cities in Motion has races in March, April, May, July, and October, and now Thanksgiving. So we are definitely a full year of events.

TIM NELSON: And I understand you have one of another of the Twin Cities famous races is joining your roster.

**VIRGINIA
BROPHY
ACKMAN:** Oh, yes. Yes. So we are the new stewards of the get in gear, which is held in April. And they-- we wanted to help continue that time-honored tradition, and they gifted that event to us so that we could keep it going.

TIM NELSON: It's quite an event. I can't ever remember being more miserable than running in the rain in April there, but I know people-- it's the season opener for a lot of folks, and they love to get out there and run along the river there. So I know you're making some changes of your own, right? You're getting ready to pass the baton here.

**VIRGINIA
BROPHY
ACKMAN:** Yes, I am. I was looking forward to celebrating 40, and so obviously, with that delay I didn't want to leave until I could help celebrate all the great years of runners and the work that everyone has put in. And so super excited to celebrate this year and know that TCM is in a great place coming out of the pandemic and able to move forward and do even more in the community.

TIM NELSON: Fantastic. Well, thank you so much for Virginia. Hope the race goes well. That's Virginia Brophy Ackman--

**VIRGINIA
BROPHY
ACKMAN:** Thank you.

TIM NELSON: --the outgoing director of the Twin Cities marathon. It's going to be run live for the 40th time on Sunday. Now, 10 mile racers are going to take the shortcut from Minneapolis to St. Paul starting at 7:00 AM. The marathoners start at 8:00. So be on the lookout for them out there, and plan for some interruptions in traffic. Give those folks-- the spectators and the runners-- the room they need this weekend.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

In 2021, Blake Proehl was the Minnesota Vikings most-promising undrafted free agent. He landed a \$115,000 contract. Did well in training camp, but a devastating knee injury put him on the sidelines for now, and he has since gone viral for a new talent-- music.

BLAKE PROEHL: (SINGING) Every time I look at you, I can feel the minutes move like time is ticking you for me. Every day that passes by, I can feel the seconds fly. There's too many miles in between. It's like my heart--

TIM NELSON: Blake's on the line now. Welcome to *Minnesota Now*.

BLAKE PROEHL: Thank you. Thank you so much for having me, man.

TIM NELSON: So that injury sounded downright scary-- tore your ACL, MCL, meniscus, and this comes right after you battle your way onto an NFL roster. Shooting for a regular spot beside some of the league's best receivers like Adam Thielen and Justin Jefferson-- talk about what that felt like.

BLAKE PROEHL: It was super tough on me, to be honest with you. I had a chip on my shoulder, and I had been coming out of free agency, and it was really, really good to be able to prove myself. It just really haunted me, because I didn't know if I was going to be able to ever come back from an injury like this. I had heard opinions that maybe I wouldn't be able to ever play again. So I think that's what really made me spiral downwards, I would say, and that's what led me to music, honestly. So I'm thankful for it. I wouldn't take it back for the world. I'm a big faith guy, so I believe it happened for a reason.

TIM NELSON: You've also grown up with the challenges of the NFL-- your dad, Ricky Proehl, played in the NFL for 17 seasons. Your brother Austin was drafted in 2018. Did you see yourself following them into the League? Were you always planning a football career?

BLAKE PROEHL: Yeah. Honestly, football runs in our bloodlines. That's what put food on our table, so it's like all we knew growing up. And I think that's what made it super tough as well. Is just like it made me think what is my life without football, and that was super scary for me. And honestly, helped me mature a lot and learn more about life-- that it goes beyond football.

TIM NELSON: And here you get this devastating injury. I've seen pictures of you out on the field on a scooter instead of playing football. But it opens you up to this other musical side of yourself and into Tiktok. What would have been different if you just walked off the field after practice with Denver that day instead of this injury?

BLAKE PROEHL: Yeah, that's what I'm saying. That's why I don't think I would ever take it back. Life can throw you in the hoop sometimes, but when you look back on it after you grow and mature out of a situation like that, you learn how-- at least in my opinion. I don't ever want to take back the times of adversity, because that's why-- I feel like that's where you truly grow. It led me to something that I've found that I truly love and where I can really inspire people. I really, really fell in love with it, so now, I have a story to tell, and I've been through some stuff the past year that led me to something beautiful.

TIM NELSON: I'm curious about where this came from. I see a lot of stories from your family that you grew up singing. And a lot of accomplished musicians also put as much work into it as an athlete. I mean, were you in-band or choir part of the time and in the locker room part of the time at school, or you're a self-starter? Tell me about your musical experience.

BLAKE PROEHL: Yeah, honestly, no. [LAUGHS] I get that question a lot, actually. It's like, did you do piano lessons? I didn't. For some reason, growing up in a football family, we didn't really do anything else but play sports-- baseball, basketball, football. It was just the cool thing to do. And for some reason, it's just like, I don't know. I just never-- I've always loved music. I mean, I got tapes my mom shows me. It's pretty cool. My baby book we found once all this stuff started blowing up-- apparently I told her when I was like three years old that music lives in me, which is super random. And then next thing you know, 20 years down the road, it kind of came to fruition, which is nuts. Because other than that, I mean I would grow up singing in the shower and stuff. I've always loved music, loved to dance, and all that. So I've always been musical but never did anything with it. Never did a lesson or anything like that. It's kind of crazy. I don't know. [LAUGHS]

And now you've got 466,000 followers on TikTok, and lots of the content there's your music. You sing a lot of really heartfelt pop songs. What inspires you musically? What are you looking for? I've learned-- and I'm still learning. I'm so new. It hasn't even been a year yet. But I've learned the thing about music is you go through cycles, especially as an artist. And my introduction to music and being an artist was in a really, really dark time.

So I think a lot of the lyrics I wrote in songs, whether it was covers or things I was singing on TikTok or Instagram, were usually pretty heartfelt ballads, because that's just where my heart was. So and I felt like emotional ballads and songs like that I feel like reach deeper when people hear those type of songs early. And also now, I do write some more poppy type upbeat songs too now, but I do love to sing ballads and super deep messages in songs. I feel like that's the reason why I got into it. Is to help other people who are struggling.

TIM NELSON: Is this something you feel like you can keep doing and keep playing football? Can you have people cheering for you in the stands and singing along with you as well?

BLAKE PROEHL: For sure. I definitely, definitely think so. I'm not going to lie. It's pretty tough, but the one thing is I came here for a job. The Vikings trusted me in my abilities, and that's what I'm here for. So that's my-- that's my first priority, but music is always going to be there no matter what. Football-- [LAUGHS] one thing about football, we wish we could play it forever, but it'll take a toll on your body eventually. And the cool thing about music is you can do it as long as you can have a voice, which is a long time. So everything I've got into football right now, and then I kind of have music at nighttime. I like to call it my moonlight job, and then I got a big time day job. So I try to balance both as best as I can.

TIM NELSON: So you talked about the toll of football-- how's your knee? What's next for you and your recovery?

BLAKE PROEHL: My knee is good. It was a long process, but the beginning was really, really tough, but I started to turn over pretty well, and it was healing really, really good. I've got access to amazing trainers and a great staff. So without them, I don't think I would have made it this far, but hopefully, we'll start practicing here soon. A couple of weeks is the goal here to get cleared. And it's been a long time, but I'm really, really excited.

TIM NELSON: Well, we look forward to seeing you out on the field with the Vikings.

BLAKE PROEHL: Thank you guys for having me.

TIM NELSON: That's Blake Proehl, who's a wide receiver for the Minnesota Vikings and a musician. You can find him on TikTok at Blake Proehl.

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TIM NELSON: And thanks for listening to *Minnesota Now*. I'm Tim Nelson in for Cathy Wurzer. We love hearing from listeners. If you have ideas for the show or Minnesotans we should talk to, feedback for what we're hearing, what you're hearing on the air, send us a note. We're at MinnesotaNow@mpr.org, [Mprnews.org](https://mprnews.org). You can also tweet me. I'm at [TimNelsonMPR](https://twitter.com/TimNelsonMPR). If you liked our interview with Blake Proehl, you'll have to listen to the show tomorrow. Our sports guys-- Wally and Eric-- are back with all the sports news you need, including a preview of the Vikings game Sunday in London. And we're nearing the anniversary of the first Peanuts Comic strip-- October 2, 1950. The first strip ran in seven different newspapers. Tomorrow on the show, we'll hear from the curator of the Charles Scholz museum on the legacy of the Peanuts Comics more than 70 years later. Make sure to listen in. Have a great day.

[MUSIC PLAYING]