

[MUSIC PLAYING]

(SINGING) One, two, three, four

KATHY WURZER: It's Minnesota Now. I'm Kathy Wurzer. Now it's not another COVID-19 pandemic, but monkeypox is a concern, and we've got the news you need to know about the virus. August is here and we'll find out what's blooming and what's buzzing in the woods and on the prairies this month. It's coming up on Minnesota Now.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Seven candidates are vying for the job of Hennepin County Attorney. How will they handle police, public safety, and child protection. We're talking to each of them this week. And a boy scout from Olivia, Minnesota made national headlines by honoring veterans. We'll hear about his enormous achievement. All of that and the Minnesota Music Minute.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

It's coming up right after the news.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Live from NPR News in Washington, I'm Lakshmi Singh. Speculation about whether House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would visit Taiwan in defiance of China's threats are answered. She's there. The Democrat landed late at night in the Taiwanese capital. Chinese state media reported that as Pelosi's plane approached the island Beijing claims as its own, Chinese fighter jets made their way toward Taiwan.

The provocative response did not deter Pelosi from sticking with her schedule of meetings with top Taiwanese leaders in the coming hours. NPR'S Barbara Sprunt reports Pelosi has a decades long record of being an outspoken critic of the Chinese government.

BARBARA SPRUNT: In 1991, Pelosi, then a junior member of Congress, joined a small congressional delegation in Tiananmen Square. Two years after the Chinese military's violent response to protests there. She unfurled a banner that read, quote, "to those who died for democracy in China." A move that prompted outrage from the Chinese government. Throughout her congressional career, Pelosi has worked to create paths for Chinese political prisoners to come to the US and has met with pro-democracy protesters from Hong Kong.

Her visit to Taiwan has faced stark warnings from China amid already tense US-China relations. Pelosi is the highest ranking elected American official to visit Taiwan. Since then, Speaker Newt Gingrich in 1997. Barbara Sprunt, NPR News, Washington.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Now to Kentucky, where the death toll from last week's floods now stands at 37 confirmed dead. From member station WEKU, Stu Johnson reports more than 1,300 people have been rescued, many more are still unaccounted for.

STU JOHNSON: Kentucky State Police have conducted over 1,000 wellness checks in the area. Governor Andy Beshear says his office is still working on how to get a number of missing people that would be anywhere near accurate.

GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR: We're finding people that might not have been reported missing originally. Still trying to get a grasp on a region where we might not have been able to give you a number beforehand about how many people lived in this area or that area.

STU JOHNSON: The governor says cell service is back in the region and power outages are down by about 2/3 since the peak period. He's requesting FEMA assistance from more counties and says mobile registration for federal support is open. For NPR News, I'm Stu Johnson in Lexington, Kentucky.

LAKSHMI SINGH: It's primary day in several states. They include the swing state of Arizona where voters are casting ballots in several key contests. Ben Giles of member station KJZZ has details.

BEN GILES: So many open races for our top statewide positions here in Arizona. The governor, the attorney general, the Secretary of State, there's no incumbents in this toss up state. Former President Trump has also, of course, played a big role here as he has in other states. He's endorsed a slate of candidates who deny the results of the 2020 election. That includes candidates for governor and candidates for Secretary of State.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Ben Giles reporting. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is down 67 points to 32,731. It's NPR.

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[MUSIC PLAYING]

KATHY WURZER: Around Minnesota right now, skies are sunny. It's a little hazy as the humidity starts to climb. It's going to be a hot one today. Highs in the upper 80s and upper 90s in Central and Southern Minnesota, mid 70s to the mid 80s in the North. At noon in Appleton, it's 84, it's 78 in Brainerd, and outside Kendall's Fish House in Knife River, Minnesota it's sunny and 63. I'm Kathy Wurzer with Minnesota News Headlines. And the weather leads the news.

An excessive heat warning will kick in this afternoon and run through the evening for the Twin Cities. MPR meteorologist Sven Sundgaard says it'll be some of the hottest weather of the summer.

SVEN SUNDGAARD: And that's the combination of the urban heat island, just all the pavement and the fact that it just gets hotter in the city and the heat lingers longer, of course, too in the urban core. Dew points are going to be moving into the low 70s. So that's going to be the problem.

Some of the hotter days we had in July didn't have those really soupy dew points. This is going to be more reminiscent of that June 20th day where we hit 101 degrees, and it was humid. Temperatures well into the 90s. Even possible to see a couple of 100 degrees readings out there today. So that heat index is going to be anywhere from 100 to 108.

KATHY WURZER: And the heat comes as several major outdoor events are taking place in the state, including Farm Fests near Redwood Falls, National Night Out and Night to Unite events are scheduled in parks and neighborhoods across the state this evening, including the metro area right during the middle of that heat warning.

I mentioned Farm Fest, candidates for Congress in Minnesota's 1st Congressional District fielded questions about agriculture policy today at that forum in Southern Minnesota. Mark Zdechlik has more.

MARK ZDECHLIK: Republican Brad Finstad and Democrat Jeff Edinger are the leading candidates in next Tuesday's special election to fill the remaining months of late Congressman Jim Hagedorn's term. Finstad highlighted his background in farming as he appealed for support.

BRAD FINSTAD: We need to send a farmer to Congress. We have enough lawyers, we have enough CEOs, we have enough career politicians in Congress right now. So we need folks that actually have dirt under their fingernails.

MARK ZDECHLIK: Edinger was not at the forum because of a recent positive COVID test. The former Hormel Foods CEO says his background in business positions him to effectively represent Southern Minnesota in Washington. I'm Mark Zdechlik.

KATHY WURZER: And we're getting word that Williams Arena and the area around it on the Twin Cities U of M Minneapolis campus is being evacuated. The Minneapolis fire department says there's a petroleum leak in the area. Several university buildings were evacuated back in June because of a suspected gas spill. A blast and a fire on the edge of the East Bank campus in Minneapolis. Emily Bright will have more on this latest evacuation at the bottom of the hour.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Well, monkeypox infections are continuing to climb in the United States. Illinois and California declared states of emergency yesterday, and the World Health Organization says the outbreak is a global health emergency. So what does the disease look like here in Minnesota? Who is at risk? Dr. Beth Thielen is on the line. She's an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota who studies infectious diseases. Welcome doctor.

DR. BETH THIELEN: Yeah, thanks for having me, Kathy.

KATHY WURZER: Glad you're with us. Now, remind folks what is monkeypox?

DR. BETH THIELEN: Yeah. So monkeypox is a viral infection. Historically, meaning over the last few decades when we've known about this virus, it has circulated primarily in Africa, although we've seen cases that have resulted from export of animals or travel in parts of the world that don't typically have monkeypox.

I think what's really unique about this current outbreak is that we're seeing many cases in parts of the world that don't traditionally have monkeypox all occurring simultaneously. And so I think right now we're at I think over 21,000 cases globally, and nearly 6,000 cases in the United States. So this is larger than any outbreak we've seen previously.

KATHY WURZER: Industry reports of the disease said it was spread through sexual contact, but it's not an STD, right?

DR. BETH THIELEN: Correct. So it's really close physical contact that spreads it. And I think many people will know that it's hard to have sexual contact without a component of close physical contact. So it certainly can spread through sexual activity, but the message we want to get out to people is that it doesn't necessarily have to be sexual activity. It can be just other forms of close contact or even contact with bedding or other cloths fabric and things like that that have been in contact with someone who has monkeypox.

- KATHY** Initially LGBTQ organizations were warning about the risk of exposure, and there seems to have been a lot of misinformation out there about who can be infected, that kind of thing. Are you concerned that this might be fueling some backlash or discrimination against the LGBTQ community?
- DR. BETH** Certainly that's the concern based on experiences that we've had with other outbreaks. I mean, I think there's certain risks that do seem to be more common amongst men who have sex with men is primarily the population where we've seen this infection thus far. And certainly we want to get the word out to those communities so that they can take appropriate precautions. And we want to be aware that this actually isn't spread just through sexual contact, and that we want to be looking and getting protective messages out to other communities as well. So I think vigilance not panic is kind of what we're aiming for.
- KATHY** With kids going back to school soon, are they at risk?
- WURZER:**
- DR. BETH** Well, I think your listeners may be aware we have seen some pediatric cases and certainly historically, and in some of the early outbreaks, we did see infections among children. And some severe infections among children. So I don't want to downplay that risk, but at the same time, we have really not seen a large number of cases in the general population, and it's really been relatively rare cases amongst children.
- Certainly there are other infections of children, things like hand, foot, and mouth disease that are more common. And so I think any rash illness I think should be evaluated, but I think the chances that it is monkeypox at this point is less likely than it is one of the more common childhood infectious illnesses.
- KATHY** By the way, how are case counts looking like in Minnesota? How are they trending?
- WURZER:**
- DR. BETH** Yeah. As of the new data from that was announced this morning by our state health department, we have 38 confirmed cases here in Minnesota. It was I think maybe around 33 or so early or late last week. And it's really been over the last few weeks that we've had cases coming up. So adding a few new cases a day, but we haven't really taken off to the same extent where we were seeing 800 or so cases in New York and 500 cases-- over 500 cases in Illinois. So we're not kind of on the same scale as some of the states with larger outbreaks, but we do have-- we are steadily accumulating cases here in Minnesota.
- KATHY** And how does someone know if they have it? Is it pretty obvious?
- WURZER:**
- DR. BETH** Well, yes and no. So really the key feature that we're having people kind of are keying in on is the rash. And typically it sort of changes over time over the course of the illness. So it may start as little-- as small sort of spots on the skin and then progress to more like blister like spots or spots filled with pus. The issue is that some of these rash illnesses can be fairly limited to small areas of the body.
- So particularly early in infection or if there's a very limited spread of the infection on the body, it may be possible that people may miss those signs of rash. So I think really rash illness is something for people to check in with their health care provider about, and particularly if they've had known exposures to someone with the disease or have had types of-- engaged in types of activities that are known to be risk factors.

So fevers and sort of general malaise, these are symptoms that were historically really thought to be precede the rash. I think what we're learning with this current outbreak is that they may come later. And so I think it's really-- I think the rash is probably the most important, the unique feature that people can kind of focus in on.

KATHY Best advice for how people can protect themselves.

WURZER:

DR. BETH Yeah. So I think being aware of where the disease is circulating and sort of taking precautions that are proportionate to the level of risk. So I think right now we do know that this is spreading through sexual activity, and particularly sexual activity with multiple partners and partners met through apps and websites and things like that. And so I think mitigating those risks at this point as much as possible while this is circulating I think is generally good practice.

We do have vaccine available, and that vaccine has been fairly limited in its supply. So I think for people who are identifying as high risk, some of the typical locations where people seek sexual health care are really good places to check in with about vaccines and talk to the health care providers.

I think this is-- the situation is evolving so quickly that I think many community practitioners may feel a bit lost and sort of have a hard time keeping up. And that's really why infectious disease doctors like myself exist. So many of the health systems will have an infectious disease specialist, and I think we're paying particularly close attention to how this is evolving and making sure that we're getting accurate, timely information out to folks.

I will say that testing is really important, and I think we've really scaled up our testing capacity. And so if people have rash illnesses, even if they don't have traditional risk factors, I think it is very important to test for monkeypox so we really get a handle on how many cases are out there and how this disease circulation is changing over time so we can give people the most accurate, up to date information about this outbreak.

KATHY And before you go, how effective are treatments if you are diagnosed with monkeypox?

WURZER:

DR. BETH Yeah. So we're still-- we have a treatment that's available. It's something called Tecovirimat or TPOX. It hasn't-- because this is such a new outbreak, we don't have a lot of data about how this works. But certainly it's something that's available for people with severe disease. And that could be just skin rashes that are limiting the ability of people to function.

So particularly we're seeing this in the mouth and genital area, and that can be quite painful. And so people can get that treatment in consultation with their doctors who consult with the public health authorities who are making decisions about getting treatment out to folks. So I think the most important thing is to seek medical attention if people are concerned. Not all people with monkeypox will require treatment, but certainly it's available if people need it.

KATHY All right a lot of good information you have here. Thank you so much.

WURZER:

DR. BETH Thanks so much for having me, Kathy.

THIELEN:

KATHY Have a good day. Dr. Beth Thielen is an infectious disease physician and scientist at the University of Minnesota.
WURZER:

[MUSIC - BROTHER ALI, 'MY BELOVED']

(SINGING) It's a story of friendship. It's a story of love.

KATHY It's the Minnesota Music Minute, and we have an uplifting song for you today. This is *my beloved* by Minneapolis based hip hop artist Brother Ali. Let's take a break and listen for a little bit.

[MUSIC - BROTHER ALI, 'MY BELOVED']

(SINGING) Faith in God high thinking simple livin', work hard deep love no conditions, gentle heart head level clear vision, back tall firm in our conviction, smile through the tears laugh through the tragedy, all we got is each other must love radically, passionately peaceful fight for it fanatically, premium on people magic humanity, dance as if no one's looking sing like no one's listenin', live and love out loud and let your glisten

KATHY 12:15 here on Minnesota Now from NPR News. I'm Kathy Wurzer It's a jungle out there. [LAUGHS] Literally in some places. Blooming plants are living it up, animal parents across the region teaching their young how to do what they do. Here is a look at what's happening in nature across Minnesota's John Latimer up in Grand Rapids. John is a phenologist, a person who observes the changes in nature through the seasons. Always a pleasure, my friend. Welcome back, John.

JOHN LATIMER: Hey Kathy, good to hear from you. Yeah, and you're right, it is a jungle out there.

[LAUGHS]

I just came in from a hike with some folks and yeah, it's-- boy, every available space has got a plant growing in it.

KATHY This is why we love Minnesota in the summer though, you know?
WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: Yeah.

KATHY I have to say, driving along various roadways and back roads, yellow seems to be the color of the day. A lot of
WURZER: yellow out there. A lot of, I don't know if it's tansy I'm seeing or other plants.

JOHN LATIMER: Yeah, you probably are seeing tansy. It's plentiful. Dark green foliage and those clusters of sort of, I think of them because I guess I'm an oldster, but they're like about the size of an aspirin tablet, only they're bright yellow. And the individual flowers, there might be throw of them in a clump at the top. And so, yeah, that is tansy. And kind of an invasive. If I get a chance, I try to at least make its life difficult in my yard.

[LAUGHS]

But it's a losing battle with tansy. It's a pretty successful plant.

KATHY I'm always pulling it when I met my mom's house in Knife River. Always.
WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: [LAUGHS] Yeah. And you will always be pulling it.

KATHY Oh, great. John, thanks. What are the kinds of flowers are you seeing right now?

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: Well, you're speaking about the yellows, and, of course, the Black-eyed Susans which are pretty easy. Got that dark center and the big yellow orange rays. Then there's a really tall one which most people just need to know that it's a sunflower. And Woodland sunflower seems to be the operating number, but technically it is-- at least the ones that I see up here in Grand Rapids are sawtooth sunflower. Just another variety of the many sunflowers that grow out there.

That one is really tall and kind of dominating. And goldenrod are beginning to bloom, especially the taller ones. We've had all three weeks of the early goldenrod, which is the-- it's probably about two to three feet tall and grows in big packs, big groups, but easily recognized as goldenrod.

Now, the Canada goldenrod has begun to bloom, and that's a much taller plant. That can be four or five feet tall. Sometimes I'm looking eye to eye with the Canada goldenrod when it's in bloom. They've got a big blooming head which is like the early goldenrod kind of identifiable. And the goldenrod group it's a kind of a one sided sort of a sticking out clump of flowers.

And they go in all directions, but they sort of-- I don't know, they're sort of like a, think of a splash of paint maybe, the paintbrush. Starts off thick and trails off toward the end. Canada goldenrod. And another more easily Canada goldenrod is it has a lot of competitors that look a lot like it. Splendid goldenrod and several others that can be easily mistaken for it. But Canada goldenrod is probably the most prevalent.

KATHY OK.

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: And then there's a little one called gray goldenrod, which is one of the easy ones to learn because the flower heads are tight. Think of a big finger, like five or six or seven inches long and maybe an inch and a half thick, and sort of slightly bent. And that's the flower structure on the gray goldenrod. And it's at the top of the plant. You'll see many of these sort of slightly bent thick fingers of yellow flowers. And that one is blooming right now too. And this is certainly the season, as you mentioned, for yellow. And for the goldenrods, this is kind of their time. They're going to be blooming now until probably into October. So,

KATHY OK.

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: We'll be looking at those.

KATHY Say what about animal babies? Notice a lot of fawns obviously, but also some turkey poult running around?

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: Yep. Lots of poult. At my bird feeder, I've got quite a group of rose breasted gross beaks, males and females.

Now young coming to the feeder. Looking a little sleeker than their mom and dad and kind of the same color as the mom. Sort of brown, that brown eyeliner and whatnot. But they'll-- the males will rapidly begin to develop the black and white and red breast and the rose breasted gross beak. But they're going to be moving out soon.

Then the other one that's really noticeable, for the last three weeks or so, the hummingbird feeders have seen a little activity in the morning and a little activity in the evening, and during the day not much. Because mom was out busy gathering worm-- well, ants and spiders and other forms of protein to feed to her babies. Now the babies are fledged and they're coming to the feeders, and I'm having to fill my feeders every day.

KATHY WURZER: Yes, I've heard that. I've heard that from other people. Before you go, I know you're working with teachers in young folks in classrooms and camps around Minnesota. We have a phenology report I really want to get it in from some day campers at the outdoor adventures camp at Long Lake Conservation Center.

ADELINNE: Hi, I'm Adeline.

FINN: I'm Finn.

CHLOE: I'm Chloe.

CLAIRE: And I'm Claire.

SAM: And I'm Sam.

SPEAKER 2: During our week at Outdoor Explorers camp at Long Lake Conservation Center, we experienced the peak of summer with life bursting everywhere. We even hand fed deer flies to the dragonflies.

SPEAKER 3: The loon chick is alive and growing. It's nearly double its size. We nearly had a loon fight. What we suspected was a young male landed on a lake causing a huge ruckus with the mom and dad. It looked like a invader male was going to challenge the resident male for its territory. They both puffed up that chest and did a lot of loud culling. The invader thought better of it and flew away.

SPEAKER 4: The otters were out about it and playing. Good news, Long Lake now has three otters. Congratulations mama and papa otter.

SPEAKER 5: All of us ate honey straight out of the hive, very sweet. Speaking of eating, we found a feast of plenty of wild berries and raspberries on the way to the bog.

SPEAKER 6: It's a great time to explore the world, and we want to remind everyone to unplug, to get outside, and to--

ALL: Live connected.

KATHY I love the loon fight by the way. That's a good one, John. [LAUGHS]

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: Oh, that was. Those kids are so sharp. They had so many good notes in that little report. Just really covered the details, which was very nice to hear.

KATHY Now, of course--

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: I have--

KATHY Go ahead.

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: A couple of things really quickly if I may. One, if you are thinking about gathering hazelnuts, you better get after them. Because I noticed yesterday that the squirrels had begun to eat the hazelnuts in my yard. And the black bears are eating the hazelnuts that my friend Dallas Hudson's over in Akeley. And, boy, once the hazelnuts reach a certain stage of ripeness, they disappear in a week. And I would say if you're thinking of gathering hazelnuts, by this weekend it'll be too late. [LAUGHS]

KATHY All right. Got to run, John. Thank you so much. Have a great rest of the day.

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: You too, Kathy. Thanks for the time. Bye bye.

KATHY See you later. John Latimer is a retired postal worker, full time phenologist. He's got a regular show in KAXE,

WURZER: Grand Rapids Community radio. You can catch that on air or online at kaxe.org.

SPEAKER 7: Health care reporting is supported by You Care. Dedicated to offering Medicare plans for every lifestyle and budget. You can get help from a You Care Medicare de-complicator to find a plan that's right for you. Youcare.org/medicare.

KATHY News with bright. Emily.

WURZER:

EMILY BRIGHT: Hi Kathy. University of Minnesota officials have ordered the evacuation of part of the Twin Cities campus as city fire officials tracked down another petroleum leak in the area. U officials say the alert was prompted by reports of the smell of a petroleum product possibly in the storm sewers in the area. No explosions or fire have been reported today.

Several U buildings were evacuated June 30th due to a suspected gas spill, blast and fire on the edge of the East Bank campus in Minneapolis. We'll continue to follow today's story. US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has arrived in Taiwan despite threats from Beijing of serious consequences, becoming the highest ranking American official in 25 years to visit there. China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and views visits by foreign government officials as recognition of the island's sovereignty.

The Biden administration did not explicitly urge Pelosi to call it off while seeking to assure Beijing it would not signal any change in US policy on Taiwan. New research presented at an Alzheimer's Association meeting today hints that even simple exercise might help seniors with mild memory problems. A US study conducted that and found that sedentary older adults who took part in either aerobic exercises or a simple stretching routine evaded the decline that's usual with so-called mild cognitive impairment. That study was conducted over the course of a year. Experts caution more research is needed.

The rain that unleashed massive floods in Appalachian mountain communities is diminishing, but now the people face a new threat, baking in the heat. The death toll now stands at 37, and crews are still trying to reach some people who've been cut off by floods or mudslides. As the heat sets in, the governor says cooling stations are being set up in buildings that were spared from the floods,

And in Minnesota, an excessive heat Warning goes into effect at 1 o'clock through this evening for the Twin Cities metro area, with heat advisories across much of Southern and Central Minnesota. This afternoon and evening, we'll have more news at one. Back to you, Kathy.

KATHY WURZER: Thank you, Emily. This fall, for the first time in 24 years, Hennepin County will have a new county attorney. It's an office with significance. The county attorney oversees adult and juvenile criminal cases, child protection and other legal matters that come before the county. There are a record seven candidates running for office, and we're talking to each of them. Today we have two candidates, Tad Jude and Mary Moriarty.

Tad Jude is a former Washington County judge. Prior to that, he was a Hennepin County commissioner. Tad Jude started his public service as the youngest person elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives at the age of 20 back in 1972, serving five terms in the house and an additional six years in the state Senate. At age 70, he's now running for Hennepin County Attorney, and Tad Jude's on the line. Welcome to Minnesota Now.

TAD JUDE: Thank you, Kathy.

KATHY WURZER: You've been quoted, Tad Jude, as saying you want to make crime illegal again. What does that mean?

TAD JUDE: Basically we've all gotten a little stir crazy with the pandemic. And I think, and particular in the city of Minneapolis and in Hennepin County, we've had certainly a breakdown of just normal common law and order, so to speak. In fact Tom Friedman described Minneapolis big swaths-- that my old hometown, Minneapolis, have been turned into a dangerous and dystopian ghost city wracked by gun violence. And you look at July 4th, we had major problems. We had chaos in downtown Minneapolis with commercial grade fireworks being aimed at people and from car to car and into apartments.

KATHY And as county attorney--

WURZER:

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

KATHY WURZER: If you're county attorney, how might you crack down on that?

TAD JUDE: Well, I think what we need to do is get back to having the county attorney do its job. Follow the facts, the evidence, apply the law. And just have the county attorney basically represent the citizens of the county. Empower victims, make sure that victims have restitution if at all possible, try to end the catch and release policies that have become commonplace, particularly with pandemic.

I mean, our whole court system has become in a way paralyzed by the pandemic as so much of our downtown area and business has become paralyzed. And we're just going to learn how to live with the pandemic again, how to live with COVID again. Have repeat violator offenders not released. I know they're on probation and parole, but not released without bail or conditions. And that's been a problem. We've had fentanyl of course, become a much bigger problem than in the past. Carjackings have skyrocketed about 300% from where they have been. So we're looking to apply the law equally and with due process, but look at the facts, the evidence, apply the law and have appropriate consequences.

KATHY You mentioned some of the repeat--

WURZER:

TAD JUDE: And in Hennepin--

KATHY I'm sorry. You mentioned some repeat offenders. And some folks who are working in the Minneapolis Police Department say they know that they see the same names come across the desk. Some of these are very young individuals. So I'm curious, and I know you've said we have a broken juvenile justice system. If you're county attorney, how might you work to repair that broken juvenile justice system?

TAD JUDE: I believe my background, it gives me the ability to work with the County Board having served on the County Board. In fact, I chaired the public safety subcommittee. And over at the legislature, I chair the Hennepin County Delegation. I can work with the legislators, try to fill the gap of the hole that we have for juvenile offenders right now.

In fact parents came to me as a judge and they said do something. They would come to me and just to protect young people. And in the case of carjackings for example, you have 19 and 20-year-olds who understand the system, so they'll recruit a 14 or 15-year-old to go steal the car knowing that they'll be caught and released. And we can't have that continue in Hennepin County.

And we need to have good support systems for young people who need them and the parents that can be the best parents they can be. And that would mean replacing the county Home School or Saint Joseph's Home for Children. We don't have those anymore. And they provided stability, they provided education, they provided health care, they provided a path forward for young people. And the parents, their parents that they had problems with addiction, they could be the best parents they could be. And that's what Hennepin County needs to have in place.

KATHY OK. So bring back the old Hennepin County Home School. Actually several of your opponents have said the same thing. With the time we have left here, Tad Jude, I want to know, what role should the Hennepin County Attorney's Office play in reviewing and prosecuting officer involved killings? As you know, current County Attorney Mike Freeman has moved away from the grand jury system. Who should make those decisions as to charging officers?

TAD JUDE: Well, for starters, I believe we'd have to find out if there's a conflict of interest with the County Attorney's Office. Because I'd be collaborating with law enforcement in terms of trying to come up with best evidence, and if there's a conflict, it would have to go to another agency or another county attorney. The county grand jury has to be reformed.

There's a need to reform so there's more accountability, more transparency. And I don't rule out using the grand jury. I think there are appropriate cases where you need another set of eyes and the county attorney needs the advice of the grand jury, of course. But it does need to be a more transparent and accountable process, and that's what I would work to achieve.

KATHY You've said that you want to exercise a colorblind application of the law. But there are confirmed reports of racial discrimination in the Minneapolis Police Department. So I'm curious, how do you have a colorblind application of the law when cases that come before you that may be tainted with discrimination because you're dealing with officers who are discriminated against those who have been arrested?

TAD JUDE: Well, I am absolute supporter of equal justice under the law. And some candidates have said, well, if you're an illegal immigrant, you're going to have a different criminal standard than if you're a legal resident of the county. And that doesn't work. You have to have equal protection and due process. And that's what our system of justice is built upon.

We need transparency and accountability. I'd work with the Police Board to make sure that best practices are followed certainly by police departments, and now we have the Human Rights Department Reports. I'm looking forward to the consent decree that appears to be in the works in terms of the Human Rights Report in the Minneapolis Police Department, because that, yeah, it's something that hopefully will address the issues that you've raised. But we have to have equal application of the law. Just follow the facts, follow the evidence, and apply the law regardless of your color, your race, your creed, or any other protective status you might have.

KATHY Before you--

WURZER:

TAD JUDE: And people have complained to me about-- they've said, well, we have more men in jail than women. Well, it's because of the actions of the individual. I mean, it's not that we're trying to put more men in jail than women. It's just because of human activity. And we have to hold everyone accountable equally.

KATHY Before you go, as I outlined your resume, it's a very long resume. You've been around a while with being a state lawmaker and a judge. Why do you want to be Hennepin County Attorney now?

TAD JUDE: Well, I've always enjoyed being a problem solver, and we've got a problem in Hennepin County. We need safer streets, we need safer neighborhoods, and a safer county. We've had children being killed, we've had hundreds homicides last year in the city Minneapolis, carjackings have gone up 300%. And the July 4th chaos has to stop.

We have to be able to go on Metro Transit and no longer feel there's a problem in terms of needles or defecation or whatever it might be. Even low level livability crimes need to be addressed. And I'm looking forward to bringing transparency and accountability to the office and professional management to the office. And like I said, just follow the facts, the evidence and the law, and do all the functions that are in the civil end of the County Attorney's Office. It's often overlooked.

KATHY OK.

WURZER:

JOHN LATIMER: But child protection and civil commitment needs to be addressed.

KATHY All right. Judge Jude, I appreciate your time. Thank you so much.

WURZER:

TAD JUDE: Thanks, Kathy.

KATHY We've been talking to former Washington County judge Tad Jude who's running for Hennepin County Attorney.

WURZER:

[MUSIC PLAYING]

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[MUSIC PLAYING]

KATHY WURZER: 12:37 here on Minnesota Now from NPR News. All this week we are interviewing candidates running to be the new Hennepin County Attorney. Hennepin County Attorney, as you know, has a lot of power. That office oversees criminal prosecutions, they also have a hand in protecting elders from fraud, and cases that involve child protection.

Mike Friedman's been on the job for 24 years. He's not seeking re-election. As I mentioned prior, there are seven people running to take his place. I just spoke with candidate Tad Jude, and now another candidate joins me. Mary Moriarty was a public defender for Hennepin County for 31 years and chief public defender for six years. She's on the program. Mary Moriarty welcome back.

MARY MORIARTY: Thank you so much, Kathy. I'm really excited to be here. I was actually thinking about my appearances on Almanac talking about the Chauvin case and how I started virtually and then I got into the studio on a different floor. And then I was on the same floor as you, but across the room. And then my last appearance was at the table. So it seems like a long time ago. But I'm very happy to be here speaking with you about the position of the Hennepin County Attorney.

KATHY WURZER: Thanks for being here. Earlier this year, I know you heard about the letter sent by several suburban mayors and police chiefs to Mike Freeman saying that Freeman has failed to adequately prosecute criminals with this rising wave of violent crime that we've seen. There are critical of cases not charged. If you're the new Hennepin County Attorney, how will things be different under a Mary Moriarty administration?

MARY MORIARTY: Yes. I met with some suburban police chiefs and what I asked them was, what do you want from the next county attorney? And they were very clear that they want communication, because they told me that they were not getting good communication from the current county attorney in terms of policies and that sort of thing.

They also did not feel included or listened to. And so one of the things I assured them, and I will do, is make sure that I am a presence, that I am listening to their concerns. Partnering with them and listening also for their solutions, and communicating in a much better way so that they understand exactly what's happening in the County Attorney's Office. Transparency is incredibly important data. I'm a person who believes very much in data and research and transparency. And I think people need to have that to have trust in the office.

KATHY WURZER: In a sense, if you're elected, you'd be switching sides and prosecuting the types of cases and criminals you defended for so many years. How much your background affect or enhance your work as county attorney?

MARY MORIARTY: It enhances. It would enhance my work. I'm actually probably better suited to be county attorney because of my work as a public defender. I was a public defender for 31 years. And the first 20 or so of those years I tried criminal cases. So that meant I sat in the courtroom and I watched and I saw how prosecutors treated victims. I am quite familiar with what actually happens in chambers with prosecutors. So it's one thing for somebody to say what they would do or what they are doing, it's another thing to actually have seen it.

The other thing is that a lot of the people I represented had histories of trauma. So when I spoke to them or I looked at their social history, I could see that they struggled, they were victimized in their lives. And I often wondered and thought actually they would not have been sitting next to me had we intervened early on in their lives when they were youth.

And so I bring-- sometimes prosecutors get into this binary, there's such a thing called a perpetrator and then there's somebody called a victim who's got to be stereotypically pristine, and that's just not life. That's just not who comes into contact with a court system. Many people who are harmed don't have their trauma addressed, and end up being the people who harm others.

So I bring that perspective. I understand criminal law really well. I understand Hennepin County leadership because I was head of the committee tasked with looking at alternatives for mental health and substance use. So my experience as a public [AUDIO OUT]

KATHY WURZER: I believe we lost Mary Moriarty. Oh my goodness. Well, we have a technical issue here. We're so sorry. We've been talking to Mary Moriarty. Of course, she is running for-- she's one of seven candidates running for Hennepin County Attorney. Prior, this afternoon, we were talking to Tad Jude. So Miss Moriarty is on the line. Of course you know she was Hennepin County Chief Public Defender for a number of years. And we were just talking to her about some of the things she plans to do if she is elected Hennepin County Attorney. As we're trying to get her back on the line here. Hopefully we'll continue our conversation. And we are trying to get Mary Moriarty on the phone right now. So hopefully she is here. Sorry about that technical glitch.

MARY MORIARTY: Oh, I didn't-- I kept talking and I didn't even realize you couldn't hear me.

KATHY WURZER: Oh, no. We have some gremlins in the system here today. You were actually talking about, and I'm glad you brought it up, that you have firsthand knowledge of working with individuals who have had trauma in their lives and they are in the criminal justice system. But I'm wondering, actions still have consequences, even if you've had a life of trauma. So how do you hold people accountable in this system, and especially-- and it seems we have a system here that is broken. You have repeat offenders who are going in and out and in and out of the system. As county attorney, how would you fix that?

MARY MORIARTY: Yeah, I think it's a great point. People do need accountability. And I care very deeply about public safety. I was the victim of a violent crime myself. And one of the things that I hear politicians say is what victims want. And I think many of them have never actually spoken to a victim. And I don't represent all victims because victims want different things, but I know many of them want something different than what the system offers.

In fact, we know statistically that over half of the people who are actually the victims of crimes never actually report them to the police because of various issues related to police and the system in general. So I very much believe in public safety. To have public safety, we need to have meaningful accountability, both for people in the community who violate the law and police.

So yes, accountability is important. We can't just look the other way. And there's a difference between meaningful accountability and the slogan that you've heard over and over about being tough on crime. Which is essentially trying to make people afraid and think that they can be safer by longer punishments when know through data that simply isn't true. Especially if you think about this, if 50% of crimes actually aren't reported and a small fraction that are reported are actually prosecuted, that doesn't make anybody safer.

So my goal is to make everybody safer. My goal is to reduce racial disparities, because we have huge racial disparities in our criminal system, as well as other metrics. Like income, homeownership, health disparities. And we need to have a just system so that people in the community trust what is going to happen, which will actually make them cooperate more with the police. So I think those things are critically important.

KATHY WURZER: By the way, how would you handle officer involved shootings that result in civilian death? As I asked Tad Jude that same question earlier this afternoon, Attorney Freeman's kind of moved away from the grand jury system. How would you handle those shootings?

MARY MORIARTY: Yes. I have studied the grand jury system a great deal. And at one point, it was designed to be a buffer between the government and people. Actually going back to England. And there were times when the people, even though the crown wanted somebody charged, the people said no.

What's happened, and I don't think most people realize this, is a grand jury is secret. There is only a prosecutor there. So there is no defense lawyer, there is no judge there except to give the grand jurors instructions on what the law is. So the only person that's there in the room is a prosecutor who's deciding which witnesses to call. They're the only ones that decide that, what to say to the jury.

There's a saying that many of us in the system, which is that a prosecutor can indict a ham sandwich. That pretty much tells you the control that prosecutors have in the grand jury system. And there really isn't a way to make it more transparent because everything is secret. It's even hard-- I mean, I've looked at a lot of grand jury transcripts in my career, and it's hard to even get those when you are a defense lawyer representing somebody.

So grand juries are not the way to go. And right now we need a way to prosecute or make decisions that people in the community trust. And the only way to get trust is to make sure that people in the community are seeing a system that handles cases equally. And I will point out the case of Jaleel Stallings. And you know that case of a man who is a military veteran who was shot by a markman round by MPD. And he was charged with attempted murder even though all the videos showed him being kicked in the head by police and MPD, and beaten above the head until he had a fractured eye socket.

So we saw the video even though the County Attorney's Office tried to prevent that from becoming public. And I think people were left to wonder after Mr. Stallings was found not guilty, why did he get charged? Was there ever a consideration of charging the police officers who essentially committed an assault on him? Because looking at the video, it would be hard to conclude that that was an objectively reasonable use of force.

But when you jump ahead and you look at the Amir Locke case, where we had County Attorney Freeman saying, I can't ethically charge a case if I can't prove it. Which is true. But people look at that and say, well, OK, but what happened in the Stalin's case? And we still have not had a statement from the county attorney about whether they stand by that prosecution or don't. And that's one of the problems.

We have to have trust. I will make the decisions on those types of cases. I won't send them to other counties as this county attorney has. The people of Hennepin County did not elect the Dakota County attorney to make the decision in Dolal Idd. The people of Hennepin County did not elect the people in Crow Wing County--

KATHY So it sounds as if you are going to-- the buck will stop with you if you're Hennepin County Attorney.

WURZER:

MARY Yeah.

MORIARTY:

KATHY Say I have literally a minute left and I do need to ask you this question. Please respond. There are folks who think

WURZER: you do not work and play well with others. And you were ousted as Hennepin County Chief Public Defender in 2020 under certain allegations. Now, you were awarded a settlement over that ousting, but you were forced to leave. So what have you learned from that experience?

MARY Oh, there's a great deal I learned. It's unfortunate I only have a minute. I do want to say, I have-- during that

MORIARTY: process, I had letters of support from Chief Arredondo and many others in the system. So I do work well with others. And sometimes you have to take a stand. And sometimes people in the system don't like that. For instance, I was told by people in the County that I was to consider myself part of the Hennepin family and not be talking to the media.

As Chief Public defender, I felt that I was not part of a Hennepin family and that I had an obligation, a duty to speak about things that were happening to our clients. So I did learn a great deal from that. And I will still be the kind of person and county attorney who stands up in public and says the right thing.

KATHY All right. I wish I had more time. I'm sorry we have kind of a contracted show here. I appreciate your time. I'm

WURZER: sorry about the technical issues earlier in the conversation. Thank you so much.

MARY Thank you, Kathy.

MORIARTY:

KATHY Mary Moriarty is one of the seven candidates for Hennepin County Attorney. Of course we'll talk to two more

WURZER: candidates tomorrow here on the program. And by the way, if you want to vote, early voting in this race is happening now. The primary is August the 9th. You can sign up to vote when you get to your local polling station. Find out how to register and where your local polling place is by visiting Hennepin.us/residents/elections.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

I don't know about you, but I'm in the mood for an uplifting story. How's this one? A 17-year-old boy scout from Olivia, Minnesota raised \$77,000 to build a Veterans Memorial in his community. His project has since gone viral in a big way. Dominic Klasman is on the line right now. Welcome to Minnesota Now, Dominic. How are you?

DOMINIC I'm good. How are you?

KLASMAN:

KATHY I'm fine. Thanks for being with us. Now, I understand this was for an Eagle Scout project. Is that right?

WURZER:

DOMINIC Correct.

KLASMAN:

KATHY Tell me about the idea.

WURZER:

DOMINIC I guess we got the idea based off a officer-- police officer, sorry. He contacted my dad, who is a scoutmaster, and he asked to see if some scouts would like to touch up what's called a Veterans Park here in town. And after searching for quite a time, we could not find one. So after some family trips and seeing all these other memorials, I decided to take it upon myself and make one in our town.

KATHY Oh, nice. So we had a park but no Memorial?

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yep.

KLASMAN:

KATHY OK. So tell me a little bit about your idea for the Memorial.

WURZER:

DOMINIC We kind of got a big idea off of Brewster Memorial Park over by Worthington. So what it looks like, is there's a walkway that leads up to a main stone. And on the walkway there is 21 blue steps printed into the cement. The 21 blue steps signifies the 21 gun salute [INAUDIBLE] steps the honor guard takes to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier along with 221 veteran pavers, and then the rest of them were donor pavers along with our American flag, our POW MIA flag and state flag, and then four benches and some plants and statues.

KATHY That's beautiful. So you decided to raise money for this. How did you get the word out?

WURZER:

DOMINIC I guess it was more of a door to door to businesses or word of mouth. Because we-- we didn't use any electronic communication through other ways.

KATHY Oh, OK. Because I know we have a radio station in Olivia. You could have used that I guess.

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yep. We did use that because that was local. but we couldn't-- like we didn't use like Facebook or anything like that.

KATHY Ah, OK. So you got the word out with local sources.

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yeah. Local word of mouth and,

KLASMAN:

KATHY Got it.

WURZER:

DOMINIC Door to door.

KLASMAN:

KATHY Oh, gosh. OK. So how much were you hoping to collect?

WURZER:

DOMINIC So my original goal was 12 to 15,000. And then due to COVID prices, we kind of had to increase it. So it believe it

KLASMAN: was 18 to 20,000. Then after so long, we had raised enough funds to be able to expand my project, and it kind of led to making it bigger.

KATHY And you raised 77,000?

WURZER:

DOMINIC Correct.

KLASMAN:

KATHY [LAUGHS] You must have been pretty surprised by this response?

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yeah. It's even weirder that exact total that it came to. Is all sevens.

KLASMAN:

KATHY Wow.

WURZER:

DOMINIC \$77,777.

KLASMAN:

KATHY Oh, for goodness sakes.

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yeah.

KLASMAN:

KATHY Wow. So when you went up door to door and you were talking to people in Olivia, what was the general reaction?

WURZER:

DOMINIC A lot of people thought it was a great idea. Just even by getting approval, it obviously didn't take long to get

KLASMAN: approval because I believe the board was-- they thought it was such a fantastic idea on seeing such younger kid be able to do this-- take action in his community.

KATHY Have you had a chance to talk to any veterans? Have they weighed in? Have they told you what they think?

WURZER:

DOMINIC Oh. Most definitely. My dad himself also is a veteran. So he-- he is my mentor, so he definitely helped a lot with

KLASMAN: this. And then during my dedication ceremony, I had a lot of people saying how, hey, that's my paver. And they're very happy to be able to see that they're being honored in some sort of way.

KATHY I understand your interview by the Washington Post and other national media. So this story has gotten some legs.

DOMINIC I definitely got more exposure than what I thought I was going to get.

KLASMAN:

KATHY [LAUGHS] What's it like?

WURZER:

DOMINIC It's kind of cool. But sometimes being national kind of builds up a little bit of nervousness. But otherwise, it's just all good.

KATHY Well, why do you think people are so inspired by your story? I'm curious.

WURZER:

DOMINIC I feel like a lot of, not calling people old, but I feel like the older generation thinks that the kids nowadays don't know how to take action. And being able to see someone be able to step up and take action and be able to-- being able to be a role model for other kids is great.

KATHY OK. So you raised the money, \$77,777, right? So all sevens.

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yep.

KLASMAN:

KATHY Now, for folks, can we see it at this point? Are you still building it or has it been--

WURZER:

DOMINIC No. It's all completed. I did my groundbreaking on May 4th this year and then I completed it May 30th on Memorial Day this year as well.

KATHY That fast?

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yeah. I believe we only did it on the weekends as well.

KLASMAN:

KATHY Oh my gosh. OK. So you did this on your own, no less? With some help.

WURZER:

DOMINIC Yep. With like some, obviously some professional help. [INAUDIBLE] Construction, he did our concrete. And some other local businesses as well that helped with it.

KATHY OK. So when I'm driving through Olivia, which I've done several times, where is the park? Where can we see this?

WURZER:

DOMINIC It is located in the corner of Kubesh Park along Highway 71.

KLASMAN:

- KATHY** OK. So I hope since this was an Eagle Scout project, are you close to making Eagle Scout?
- WURZER:**
- DOMINIC** As of right now, yes. I am close. I just sent in all my paperwork the other day.
- KLASMAN:**
- KATHY** So you sent your paperwork in for the Eagle Scout designation. Who decides?
- WURZER:**
- DOMINIC** Yep. So it's an Eagle Scout Board of Review that basically determines whether or not I get Eagle or not.
- KLASMAN:**
- KATHY** Oh gosh. OK. With all the work you've done, I would think you'd be a shoe in to be Eagle Scout.
- WURZER:**
- DOMINIC** I would think so too.
- KLASMAN:**
- KATHY** And when you get to that point, what's that going to mean to you?
- WURZER:**
- DOMINIC** I mean, once I get to that point, it's definitely going to be able to-- I guess it doesn't mean it's the end of my scouting career, and just need to continue to live up to that standard.
- KLASMAN:**
- KATHY** So you're 17. So you're going to be a senior this year, right? At Olivia High?
- WURZER:**
- DOMINIC** Correct.
- KLASMAN:**
- KATHY** And what are you looking forward to?
- WURZER:**
- DOMINIC** Definitely getting out of high school. Be able to really get out there.
- KLASMAN:**
- KATHY** Well, you've done a great job. What an amazing project that you've done. And you did it pretty much on your own. So as I say, when I'm driving through I'm going to definitely stop and see your work. And we thank you for everything you've done.
- WURZER:**
- DOMINIC** Thank you.
- KLASMAN:**
- KATHY** Dominic Klasman is a 17-year-old Eagle Scout living in Olivia Minnesota. He raised more than \$70,000 to build a Veterans Memorial in his hometown. Say there are a couple of other things happening you need to know about. We do have some severe weather that's popped up in far Northern Minnesota. A severe thunderstorm warning is in effect until 1:15. We're watching this storm system, this cell. It's around Warba, Minnesota. If it keeps going to the East, Meadowlands you'll be seeing this. Large hailstones and high winds appear to be the problem out of this particular storm.
- WURZER:**

And in fact, Northern Minnesota is under a severe storm watch. It will be at, not a watch, the chance of isolated severe storms possible tonight across a large swath of Northern Minnesota. So we're watching that. We're watching the excessive heat. And then officials in Minneapolis are tracking down what's believed to be another possible fuel spill in the storm sewers near the University of Minnesota's East Bank campus. They evacuated the area around Williams Arena earlier in the hour. We'll have more coming up from Emily Bright. So a lot going on. Thanks for listening to Minnesota Now here on MPR News. Make it a good day.