

[MUSIC PLAYING]

CATHY WURZER: It's *Minnesota Now* I'm Cathy Wurzer. If you're planning to take a flight out of town, you probably want to make a plan B. We'll get the details on hundreds of canceled flights across the country. Gardeners are living the high life this time of the year. I'll talk with gardening and cooking expert Meg Cowden on what's growing in the garden and how she's cooking it up.

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We'll talk to meteorologist Sven Sundgaard with weather. The director of the Duluth Railroad Museum has become a YouTube star. We'll talk to him about his recent fame. And musician Papa Mbye is here. We'll hear about his favorite musicians and what's next for the North Minneapolis-based musician and artist. All that plus the song of the day and the Minnesota Music Minute. All that and more right after the news.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Live from NPR News in Washington, I'm Lakshmi Singh. At the NATO summit in Madrid, Spain, President Biden has announced a planned significant increase in the US military presence in Europe. NPR'S Tamara Keith reports this all comes back to countering Russian aggression against Ukraine and boosting the alliance.

TAMARA KEITH: US officials say this announcement is a recognition of a changed security environment in Europe, which became undeniable with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Among other things, Biden said the US would increase the number of Naval destroyers stationed in Spain, establish a permanent headquarters in Poland for the US Fifth Army Corps, station a brigade combat team in Romania, and position two F-35 fighter jet squadrons in the UK.

JOE BIDEN: Together with our allies, we're going to make sure that NATO is ready to meet the threats in all directions across every domain, land, air, and the sea.

TAMARA KEITH: Biden said this is the US and its allies stepping up, proving that NATO is needed more now than ever. Tamara Keith, NPR News, Madrid, Spain.

LAKSHMI SINGH: The US Supreme Court is expanding the power states have to intervene in certain criminal cases on tribal lands. Today, five of the nine justices sided with Oklahoma in its attempt to prosecute Victor Castro-Huerta, a non-native American who was convicted of neglect of his five-year-old stepdaughter, a Native American child. From member station KOSU, Alison Herrera has details.

ALLISON HERRERA: In a five to four decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Oklahoma does have concurrent criminal jurisdiction when prosecuting crimes committed by non-Native people when they commit crimes against Native people within reservation boundaries. Voting in the majority were Justices Kavanaugh, Alito, Coney Barrett, Thomas, and Chief Justice Roberts. Dissenting were Justices Gorsuch, Sotomayor, Kagan, and Breyer.

The decision is a follow-up, nearly two years after the court ruling in the *McGirt versus Oklahoma* case which resulted in 40% of Eastern Oklahoma being affirmed as reservation land for six tribes. Oklahoma's attorney general's office said in a statement that no matter the decision, they would continue to work with the tribes on matters of public safety. For NPR News, I'm Allison Herrera in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Trump-backed Colorado representative Lauren Boebert won her party's primary yesterday. Stina Sieg with Colorado Public Radio says Boebert defeated a more moderate Republican in the contest.

STINA SIEG: Boebert faced a concerted effort by left-leaning groups that encouraged Democrats to change their affiliation in order to vote against her in the primary. She faced Don Coram, a state senator who supports LGBTQ rights and legalized cannabis. Boebert is favored to win the general election in her largely rural and red district.

LAKSHMI SINGH: The Dow Jones Industrial average is up 27 points. The NASDAQ is down 40. This is NPR.

CREW: Support for NPR comes from NPR stations. Other contributors include C3 AI. C3 AI software enables organizations to use artificial intelligence at enterprise scale, solving previously unsolvable problems. C3 AI is enterprise AI.

CATHY WURZER: Around Minnesota right now there's a mix of sun and cloud cover, some rain in parts of northern Minnesota. Highs today, lower 80s to the lower 90s, cooler near Lake Superior. At noon, it's raining in Thief River Falls and it's 58. Is 55 at the Duluth Harbor. And outside CD's Cafe in Rushmore Minnesota it's sunny and 83. I'm Cathy Wurzer with Minnesota news headlines.

State health officials are confirming a second case of monkeypox in Minnesota. This is the second Twin Cities resident with the illness, and officials say they likely caught it while traveling outside the state. Officials also say this case is not connected to the first case announced earlier this week.

The COVID infection rates in Minnesota are still at the high risk level. 3,362 new infections were reported yesterday, numbers which cover this past weekend. There are 24 new infections per 100,000 residents. That's down from previous weeks but well above the health department's high risk level. There are 397 patients currently hospitalized with COVID-19, including 29 in the ICU. Over the last week six people died of COVID every day. Starting tomorrow, the state health department will move to weekly COVID reports rather than daily reports.

A Central Minnesota Sheriff says he wants to know who was behind a drone that approached kids fishing along a lakeshore and then dropped candy to them. Tim Nelson has more.

TIM NELSON: The incident happened about 6:00 PM on Monday. According to Benton County Sheriff, Troy Heck, he said a handful of children and a woman were fishing at Little Rock Lake along US Highway 10 near Rice. The woman told investigators that a drone approached and observed them, flew away and then returned and dropped a bag of candy near the children. Heck says that witnesses saw a vehicle speeding away from where the suspicious drone flights seemed to originate.

TROY HECK: The vehicle is described as a black full size SUV, likely a Chevrolet, possibly a GMC make from the early 2000s. One of the witnesses was also able to get a look at the license plate number, and they recalled that the license plate letters were FED.

TIM NELSON: He's asking anyone who might have information about the incident to call the Benton County Sheriff's Office. I'm Tim Nelson.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

CATHY It's possible Delta Airlines might be in the news again this holiday weekend because of potential travel disruptions. And if that happens, Delta will have company. According to the travel website thriftytraveler.com, since yesterday, American has canceled 500-plus flights and counting. United is up to 200. Bad weather will complicate the equation. So what gives? We're going to ask Gunnar Olson that he's a flight deal analyst and editor at Thrifty Traveler. Gunnar, welcome to the program. How are you?

WURZER:

GUNNAR Hi, Cathy. I'm well. How about you?
OLSON:

CATHY Good. Thanks for being here. So I guess more than 500 flights canceled just today. And Delta announced yesterday it's going to allow travelers to reschedule flights free of charge this weekend. That seems to be a sign of more trouble ahead.
WURZER:

GUNNAR Yeah, we definitely think so. And I think Delta's waiver that they announced yesterday is them admitting that there is going to be logistical challenges at our airports all across the country this weekend.
OLSON:

CATHY Delta has been complaining of staffing shortages. Earlier this summer it said it would cut 100 flights a day. Is that still a factor here?
WURZER:

GUNNAR Yes, definitely. I think what has happened in the last month is they have not been able to staff up to pre-pandemic levels. And that means that their routes, their network around the country is going to be disrupted because travel demand is as high as it was before the pandemic. So everyone is taking back to the skies, but there's not enough people above and below the wing to staff those routes right now. So I think that's going to lead to some of this pain that they're expecting this weekend and that we've been seeing over the last couple of weekends.
OLSON:

CATHY I saw a figure somewhere, maybe you saw it too, some 50,000 airline workers left or were let go at the height of the pandemic. What are airlines doing to find workers?
WURZER:

GUNNAR Yeah, I think that's about right. Basically, the airlines are doing whatever they can to find workers within their own ranks and from other airlines. For instance, the smaller regional carriers, some of which fly under the Delta flag, for instance, are having some of their staff taken up to the main Delta carrier.
OLSON:

So some of those smaller routes are having issues with their staffing, and it's as those people trickle up. But I know all the airlines have made a big point of making sure that they're hiring pilots quickly. There are some hurdles as far as training hours, the amount of time that pilots need in order to safely fly all of these airlines. But right now they're staffing up as quickly as they can.

CATHY So airlines are cutting flights to balance staffing. And as they say, they hope to increase reliability, but that doesn't seem to be happening.
WURZER:

GUNNAR Right. Things like this, that free change waiver that Delta has just issued for this weekend, they typically reserve these things for storms, weather events, whether it be thunderstorms or snowstorms or other inclement weather that's impacting flights. But this is a very different kind of storm for them and one that they're not going to be able to ride out very easily.
OLSON:

So they're bracing for this. They're hiring as fast as they can. But I think for this summer, we can expect there to be at least some disruptions.

CATHY What's this doing to Delta's brand and really to trust in the industry as a whole?

WURZER:

GUNNAR Yeah, well, for Delta in particular, they've prided themselves for a long time on being on-time carrier. Reliability
OLSON: has been so big for them and a huge part of their brand. And they've been able to do that because they build Slack into their system. There are pilots, flight attendants, there are people waiting at their major hubs to fill in on canceled flights.

Without that Slack, Delta has become pretty much just like every other airline. We're seeing Delta lead the way in cancellations last weekend. They also had a big meltdown over Memorial Day weekend. I know people, especially in the Twin Cities area and in Minnesota still love Delta because of the connectivity here out of the MSP hub. But it's definitely something to look at that their reputation has taken a little bit of a hit.

But obviously, they're not alone here. So many airlines are dealing with these same issues. Delta because of their reputation as a reliable carrier, probably just a little more so.

CATHY And as all this is happening, ticket prices have increased more than 45% since January, which is eye popping.

WURZER: And the flying experience, which really wasn't, let's face it, great to begin with seems as though it's bad as it's ever been. How do the ticket prices fold into all of this?

GUNNAR Well, we are seeing overall on average ticket prices are much higher than they used to be. Like you said, 40-
OLSON: something percent in a lot of cases. The demand is back for travel. People are ready to fly. And this summer, people are proving that they're willing to pay just about anything to fly.

That's not to say that there aren't really good deals out there. Airfare is ultimately a competitive business. And on the routes where there's lots of competition between airlines, we're still finding some really good low airfare. But it's definitely expensive. If you're going to your cousin's wedding for a weekend this summer, it's probably going to cost you. But as we look out into fall, things are a little bit more normal than we're seeing.

So if you can stomach saving your trip until September, October, November, there's plenty of good deals out there. We're finding them every day. But this summer there's no doubt there's a little bit of pain as far as your wallet when we're flying this summer.

CATHY So give me an idea if you would please about deals you're seeing yet this summer.

WURZER:

GUNNAR Yeah, so this summer we've seen a lot of value on flights internationally. I think the best value is going to be to
OLSON: Lisbon, Portugal and not to Los Angeles. The domestic airfare is sky high right now. There's so much demand for people to get around the country. But if you look overseas, you're actually going to find some really good value.

All throughout the summer we found great flight deals to Europe flying [AUDIO OUT]. So think about Ireland's Aer Lingus, Portugal's TAP, Scandinavia's SAS, Icelandair which flies in and out of Minneapolis too. There's a lot of value on those carriers, and they have some nonstop flights too, which people are obviously interested in right now. You don't want to make a connection if you can avoid it at this point so you don't get delayed or canceled.

But one thing we've seen some eye popping stuff. Down to Cape Town, South Africa from Minneapolis for less than \$600 round trip. And that's a record low from Minneapolis. So there's lots of stuff out there. If you're willing to leave the country and without the return testing requirement, it's a little bit easier to do so than it was before.

CATHY WURZER: So I'm glad you mentioned try to get a nonstop flight if you can, because if folks are planning to travel for this weekend and they're hearing, oh my gosh, this could be kind of a mess, how do you prepare for something like this?

GUNNAR OLSON: Yeah, so there are some quick and easy tips we actually have some on our website at thriftytravel.com. You can read all of them. But the best thing to do is, especially if you're flying Delta, take advantage of this waiver and go change your flight and pick the very first flight of the day. The early flight is much less prone to cancellations and delays. As the day goes on, there's a ripple effect of cancellations and delays where the crews that need to be in Minneapolis for your next flight might not be able to get there because of their cancellation and so on and so forth.

So go book that early flight with this travel waiver. You won't have to pay for the change fee. There's no fare difference applied either. Like I mentioned before, fly nonstop if you can. I know that's easier said than done in some cases. But the more flights you take, the better your chances are for getting disrupted.

And then otherwise, just some simple things we usually recommend. Don't check a bag. This is especially so right now. The bag drop line at the airport, especially at MSP right now. That's the worst pinch point in your travel experience. We've seen people waiting up to an hour just to get their bag on the conveyor belt, and that's before they even get to the security line.

Plus, the airlines are losing bags at record levels, partially due to these staffing concerns. So don't chance it if you can avoid it. Control your own destiny. And then finally, get to the airport early. I love the memes of people making fun of dads who are a little overzealous and getting to the airport early, but I think dad's going to be vindicated this weekend. It's just good advice to take your time and get there early.

CATHY WURZER: Yeah, well, Gunnar, thank you so much. I appreciate your time. And if you're flying, good luck this weekend.

GUNNAR OLSON: Thank you, Cathy.

CATHY WURZER: You're welcome. Gunnar Olson is a travel reporter, a flight deal analyst at thriftytraveler.com.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

It is our Minnesota Music Minute. This, of course, is Lizzo with *Juice*, a song she hit big with back in 2019, a perfect song to get you dancing on this Wednesday afternoon. Now, Lizzo wasn't born and raised in Minnesota, but she started her recording career in Minneapolis. So we claim her. She fits in with our Minnesota Music Minute

[MUSIC - LIZZO, "JUICE"]

(SINGING) Got a bih looking like RAGU

Lit up like a crystal ball

That's cool, baby, so is you

That's how I roll

If I'm shining, everybody going to shine. Yeah, I'm goals

I was born like this, don't even got to try. Now you know

I like chardonnay, get better over time. So you know.

Heard you say I'm not the baddest [MUTED] you lie

It ain't my fault that I'm out here getting loose

Got to blame it on the goose

Got to blame it on my juice, baby

It ain't my fault that I'm out here making news

I'm the pudding in the proof

Got to blame on my juice

I love Lizzo. 12:17 here on *Minnesota Now*. Have you been enjoying the fruits and veggies from this summer's harvest? Author and gardener extraordinaire Meg Cowden is back to talk about what's happening in the garden right now. She's got a few gardening tips for us too. She is the author of the book *Plant Grow Harvest Repeat*, founder of the website Seed to Fork and the gardening advice group Modern Garden Guild. Meg, how are you?

MEG COWDEN: Hi Cathy. I am good. Yes, enjoying summer, it's wonderful, isn't it?

CATHY I love summer. I'm a big summer fan. We are about to head into July. Can't believe that the month of June is almost gone here. Are you planting anything right now?

MEG COWDEN: I am. Last night I dropped in my third succession of sweet corn. So the whole reasoning behind that is well, first of all, I had open space. But the other thing is that I should have corn in season starting sometime in late July, pushing us all the way into September. So this is all what my books about, Cathy, right. Succession planting is continuing to sow seeds.

I've sowed more broccoli recently and kale for the fall and cabbages. I'm always sowing beets and carrots and green beans. And I'll even sow more summer squash soon to offset pest pressure, because my summer squash can fall prey to pest pressure. And so I just rip the plants out that are diseased and start over.

CATHY Say, by the way, how are you doing with pests?

WURZER:

MEG COWDEN: So this is the beautiful thing about the garden is that it is the one place in our lives where it is completely normal to do the same thing year over year and not only expect but hope for different results. And pest pressure is a great example of that. The pests are different every single year.

So right now I'm seeing a couple of normal pests, like my cabbage white butterflies, those cute little white butterflies that you see flying around. They feast on our core crops, so our broccoli and our cabbage but also on like roadside mustards. They're ubiquitous. I have a butterfly net in the garden, and I'm killing them any chance I get, and I squash their larva.

Colorado potato beetles got out of hand last year in our garden, so we knew they'd be bad. I do a daily swipe for those and drop those into soapy water. But I haven't seen any cucumber beetles yet, which I think is strange because last year, they were out like before June. So pest populations, when you grow year over year, you see differences.

But one pest I absolutely cannot stand that never goes away in my garden is the three-lined potato beetle that devours my tomatoes and my Cape gooseberry.

CATHY Oh, yeah, you probably are not too happy.

WURZER:

MEG COWDEN: Yeah, they're gross to deal with. All the other pests I mentioned are too bad, but the three-lined potato beetle does something very special because they don't have protective properties in their larva. Even though they eat a plant that has toxicity, their body doesn't absorb it. So they actually take their fecal matter and they spread it on the backs of their larva to disenfranchise humans and predators alike from removing them. So they are my least favorite.

I actually take a whole leaf and drop it into my soapy water because oh, I can't touch those things. They drive me crazy. Yeah, so it's all fun and games in the garden.

CATHY The things I learn from you. So I asked you what you're planting, what are you harvesting?

WURZER:

MEG COWDEN: Oh, so right now since we have spoken, strawberry season came into full effect and we're now waiting. I only harvested-- the kids and I only harvested about four 4 and 1/2 pounds of strawberries last night. So we're almost done with strawberry season, which is wonderful because it's almost like the news cycle, Cathy. Every day there's something different that's coming into season and something pressing that I have to deal with, whether it's a pest or a harvest. And Strawberry season demands our attention.

So strawberries are a big thing right now. We're still eating asparagus and rhubarb. We're still eating cilantro. Our piece have come into season. We've got a few radishes left. I harvested my first carrots of the season recently. We got beets.

CATHY Oh, wow.

WURZER:

MEG COWDEN: Yeah, beets, and celery, and broccoli, and kohlrabi, cabbages as well. So it's been an unusual harvest, though, in that with my succession planting, I'm actually harvesting my first and second successions of some things at the same time. The first successions stalled a little bit, and my theory is the cold spring caused them to have a little bit of stress and so they sort of stopped growing.

But the second succession that I planted in late April, they grew phenomenally fast and well. And so I ended up harvesting like all my cabbages were a two-month stagger but harvested them all on Monday. It was weird.

CATHY

Wow, it's getting a little dry out there too, obviously. How are you doing with the watering?

WURZER:

MEG COWDEN: Yeah, so we have drip irrigation. And our irrigation is set to go on for 20 minutes very early in the morning every other day in our beds. And our irrigation pipes for the most part are drip lines. We actually buried them under like 3 or 4 inches of compost so the water can really settle in and promote a deeper watering and deeper routes.

Other than that, I don't water any of my crops unless all these places where I had mentioned that I'm establishing new seeds and trying to get things to propagate, that's where I will go in and hand water up to three times a day right now. The dryness is unfortunately I feel like this is becoming more normal. Dryness and wind, Cathy, that is the other factor for me with climate change that I feel like we need to adapt to really quickly.

I've lost several of my nasturtium plants to wind and some of my onions have been knocked over and they just don't want to stand back up. So this is the story of a gardener, though, is you're so tuned into the real nuances of the climate, and it's very humbling. It's very grounding. And we adapt just like the garden adapts.

CATHY

Interesting you brought up wind. Sven Sundgaard, our meteorologist, is going to join us in the next few minutes.

WURZER:

And he and I have been talking about just how windy it has been, and people are noticing this. And he says that June has been about 16% windier than normal. So what you're seeing is actually what's been going on. It's just strange and then it dries out everything too.

MEG COWDEN: Yeah, but I feel like last year too the wind, this whole spring, the wind-- and I don't know, for me, I love weather. There's something about wind that makes me say, OK, we are not in control. It is a very humbling part of the environment for me, a little scary. I'm not scared of the dark anymore. I'm 48, but the wind freaks me out. I don't know if that makes sense to you at all.

CATHY

It does. It does. It does. I used to do a lot of work in South Dakota, and, of course, just constant wind out there,

WURZER:

and it just wears on you after a little bit. See, what has most impressed you in your garden this season so far? What's popping up where you think to yourself, wow, that's pretty amazing.

MEG COWDEN: The strawberries have been great like I had mentioned. What really impressed me was I harvested my first tomatoes on June 8. Now, we all know that this spring really sucked. It was terrible, right? May was way colder than average, and June wasn't that warm.

So I was so surprised to see it was just a handful of cherry tomatoes, but I harvested them on June 8. And these were plants that I had started indoors in late February, and they flowered indoors in April. And I let the fruit set. I was like, oh, whatever. You're not supposed to do this, but this is what the garden is. It's my garden, my rules. And they ripened in spring. And actually not only did they ripen, Cathy, that was the earliest I've harvested tomatoes on what was the coldest spring.

And so that to me is just like the garden is telling me to keep trying and to keep pivoting and to keep planting things in ways that questions my own philosophies, because the garden says, in that moment it said to me like, yes, you need to keep experimenting. Keep going, right? So that's where every day the garden really will shed light in that way for me.

CATHY Love that. I'm going to end it there too, Meg. Thank you so much. It was good to talk to you again.

WURZER:

MEG COWDEN: Thanks, Cathy. All right, enjoy the rest of the month.

CATHY Thank you. You too. Meg Cowden has been with us, author of the book *Plant Grow Harvest Repeat*. She's the

WURZER: founder of the website Seed to Fork and the Modern Garden Guild.

CREW: Support comes from GS Motors, a locally owned dealership specializing in pre-owned electric vehicles, working to make electric car ownership more accessible for a more sustainable future. EV home charging made easy, powered by XL Energy, gsmotors.us.

CATHY Little cool in Thief River Falls right now where it's raining in 59 degrees. The hot spot appears to be Worthington

WURZER: where it's 85, 81 in Austin and Albert Lea Brainerd is at 69. St. Cloud 73 degrees under sunshine, Duluth now sunny over the hill where at 68 degrees. It's cool at the Harbor, where it's 57. It's 80 at Twin Cities International. Steven John's with us with a look at the news, Steven.

STEVEN JOHN: Thank you, Cathy. NATO has declared that Russia is the most significant and direct threat to its members' peace and security. The alliance vowed today to strengthen support for Ukraine even as that country's leader chided NATO for not doing more to help it defeat Moscow. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization held its annual summit in Madrid in a world transformed by Russia's invasion.

A Texas official says two more migrants from the San Antonio trailer tragedy have died, raising the death count to 53. A Mexican government official says most of the migrants found dead after being abandoned in a truck in the sweltering Texas heat were from Mexico.

California authorities say a Sierra, Nevada wildfire has destroyed four structures and was a threat to more than 500 homes and other buildings. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the Rices fire grew to 769 acres near the Yuba River in Nevada County and there was no containment. At least five small communities were under evacuation orders. Authorities said the fire began with a burning building and the flames spread to vegetation.

Stocks have been shifting between gains and losses on Wall Street, keeping the market on track for its fourth monthly loss this year. Meanwhile, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said today there's no guarantee the central bank can tame runaway inflation without hurting the job market. The Dow Jones Industrial average was up a fraction in midday trading.

The Minnesota Twins continue their five game series in Cleveland tonight after splitting yesterday's doubleheader. The Twins remain atop the American League Central Division by three games over the Guardians. In soccer, Minnesota United takes on the LA Galaxy tonight in Los Angeles.

Mainly sunny for Minnesota today, breezy statewide. There's a wind advisory in the Southwest into the evening hours with a chance of showers and thunderstorms over the northern half of Minnesota. This is NPR News. It's 12:29.

CATHY Thank you, Steven John. That was a nice conversation we had a few minutes ago with gardener Meg Cowden,
WURZER: who's been carefully tracking how climate change is affecting her garden. We've had that cool spring, a stormy and sweaty start to summer. So let's bring in meteorologist Sven Sundgaard with the latest. Hey, Sven.

SVEN Hey. Yeah, and who would have thought two months ago we'd be talking about a pretty hot June that's wrapping
SUNDGAARD: up.

CATHY Right? It didn't seem like it at first, but really mother nature put the pedal to the metal and in June was pretty
WURZER: toasty.

SVEN Which says a lot about really the last couple of weeks because the first 10 days of the month we were running
SUNDGAARD: below normal. So we more than made up for it to place us at what will end up being an average temperature for the month of 73 degrees, that's 3 and 1/2 above normal. So that's averaging all the highs and lows together.

And it may not sound like a lot, but the standard deviation for June temperatures is 3 degrees. So that means that we are outside of the normal range where 68% of the data falls by quite a bit. So we're pretty much guaranteed to be the 11th hottest June when it wraps up tomorrow.

CATHY Wow, and I've been noticing, and this is, of course, something that we've seen now for a while, also warm nights.
WURZER:

SVEN Yes, absolutely. That's one of our bigger climate change signals in the summer. The triple digits are one thing.
SUNDGAARD: 101 degrees last week, of course, got everyone's attention. But while we were sleeping or maybe not sleeping that comfortably, we had, of course, some very warm nights where we dropped to only about just below 80 last week, strong climate change fingerprints on that.

But even tonight, a night that wouldn't probably get anyone's attention, we're looking at a low that'll be down into the low to mid 70s. That's significantly warm for this time of the year and even at this point in the summer. And so Climate Central has this climate shift index that they apply to different variables and that gives a one or two, which is a pretty strong climate change signal.

So we are seeing this trend in warmer nights, also more humid summers. I think a lot of people are noticing that. And in fact, the DNR Senior Climatologist Kenny Blumenfeld actually had an article out last week that heat waves are getting more humid so that the heat indices are getting hotter. Of course, the 1930s have way more 100-degree readings than any other decade. But it was a dry heat.

I know it sounds stupid to say that when it was 107 degrees, but we reached that and surpassed that for a heat index last Monday all because we're seeing this increase in humidity. And, of course, what does that humidity spell to? That more water in the atmosphere means a lot more these extreme rainfall events, especially in the summer.

CATHY Yeah, exactly. See, let's talk about the wind. Meg mentioned that she's been noticing that, almost everybody else
WURZER: has too.

SVEN Yeah, I know. We talked about this morning too. That's been the number one question I've been getting since
SUNDGAARD: winter really. And it has been a windier than normal year so far. But June as well has been a windy one. It's just that back and forth between cooler and hotter weather, the hotter weather really dominating this month like a blowtorch blowing in from the South like it is. Today is a great example of why this month has been windier than normal. 16% more wind than normal for the month of June and this is really another consecutive month since that pattern change that we saw in January that led to a chillier pattern.

CATHY So it's been wet up in northern Minnesota and the South not so much.
WURZER:

SVEN Yeah, we talked about just a minute ago about these extreme rainfall events, where they had radar indicated
SUNDGAARD: precip totals of 6 to 10 inches of rain in one night. That's what you'd expect from a hurricane yeah, just North of St. Cloud last Thursday night. And that kind of thing just did not happen before. And overall, our annual precipitation is increasing too.

But that's the one spot. Basically, St. Cloud, Little Falls, Brainerd Grand Rapids, that North central part of the state has been seen double the normal precip for the month of June, sort of, makes sense. But then you get into Southern Minnesota, including the Twin Cities, New Ulm, Hutchinson to Eau Claire, only about a third to half of our normal precip and actually at the airport, MSP airport is even worse. We've seen about an inch of what should be a normal 4 inches of water in the month of June. So yeah, you're noticing it's windy. It's also getting very crispy in your lawns.

CATHY Any relief coming maybe this weekend?
WURZER:

SVEN Maybe a little bit. We do at least have some chances. We were in a drier stretch, so whenever we see at least
SUNDGAARD: that there's a few chances in the next several days, that's a little encouraging. But the nature of thunderstorms, of course, is hit and miss.

So northern Minnesota is getting showers right now actually, again where they don't need it. Red Lake, Bemidji up towards Thief River Falls we've got some rain, no lightning or thunder in that, but that's some leftovers from storms in North Dakota. But we are going to be watching Eastern North Dakota for storms to develop this evening. There's a slight risk of severe weather for that Northwestern corner of the state.

What's left of those thunderstorms will drift across northern Minnesota but also drift Southeast overnight. So early tomorrow morning in the Twin Cities, South Central Minnesota where we need the rain, we could have some scattered showers, maybe even a couple of thunderstorms. But then as we head into the weekend, another shot, Saturday night, maybe also 4th of July night too. So maybe a few natural fireworks mixed in with the real fireworks and otherwise, pretty hot.

We may be just shy of 90 today, but I think we'll get close to it tomorrow if we can clear out that morning activity early, a little cooler for the weekend. But then it looks like we're going to be back up towards 90 much of next week. In fact, the Climate Prediction Center's 6 to 10-day outlook is calling for highly likely warmer than normal temperatures next week. So we may be dealing with some pretty intense heat again.

CATHY All right, Sven. Thank you. Have a good day.
WURZER:

SVEN You too.

SUNDGAARD:

CATHY That's Sven Sundgaard, an NPR meteorologist.

WURZER:

[MUSIC PLAYING]

CREW: Support comes from the original mattress factory, hand building mattresses and box springs at its Maplewood factory here in Minnesota and selling them directly to you. Learn more about the process, products, and customer first philosophy at originalmattress.com.

CATHY Where do you suppose the best transportation museum in America might be? According to USA Today, it's in our own backyard, the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in downtown Duluth. The museum housed in the historic Union Depot is home to all manner of locomotives, cabooses, and freight cars plus it has a nifty collection of dining car China and all kinds of railroading memorabilia.

WURZER:

Thanks to the videos starring the museum's Executive Director Ken Buehler, interest in the museum is growing and so is its membership base. The YouTube videos are getting thousands of views and they range from Ken's favorite item in the museum to a tour of a private rail car. The budding YouTube star is on the line right now live from Duluth. Hey, Ken. How are you?

KEN BUEHLER: Cathy, it's good to talk to you again. I'm fine, and thanks for having us on the show today.

CATHY I'm glad you're here. I'm not surprised the videos are popular. You know what you're doing in front of a camera and a microphone. Was it fun?

WURZER:

KEN BUEHLER: It was a lot of fun, but it was a horrible mistake. I had started 2020 with the resolution that we would do one or two of these a month. And I'm very fortunate in that our station manager is Josh Miller, and Josh graduated from St Cloud State with a degree in photojournalism and television production. And I met him when I was still doing the regular basis here in Duluth. He was my director and just turned out he [AUDIO OUT] able to work for us here.

And I went into his office and I said, we're going to do one [AUDIO OUT] a month. I'll write them and produce them and we'll be real well. Well, then, of course, along comes March, this pandemic thing and they announced that we were going to be shut down. And, of course, you know how many of these [AUDIO OUT] between the start of the year and March, right?

CATHY Right.

WURZER:

KEN BUEHLER: So I went into Josh's office when they said they were going to shut us down two weeks and I just [AUDIO OUT] can't possibly last longer than two weeks. I said maybe they put another week on it, maybe that's as long as they can possibly go. It's got to be over by then.

I said, let's go on our YouTube channel, which we had already set up, and let's go on our YouTube channel right now and say we're going to do one of these behind the scenes video tours every single day that the museum is closed. It can't possibly go past 21 of these. 148 later and 1 and 1/2 million views--

CATHY WURZER: It's a good story, and it worked out really well. The results are probably better than you ever even imagined they could be.

KEN BUEHLER: It's unbelievable. Like I say, a million and a half views, our membership went from about 800 members when we started the pandemic to over 1,500 today. We've almost doubled our membership of the museum. It's the largest it's ever been in the history of our organization. Our 1000th member, by the way, came from Sweden. It used to be our membership was pretty much regional here in the Midwest, certainly superior and area around Minnesota and [AUDIO OUT] but right now our membership is across the country and indeed around the world.

CATHY WURZER: Why do you think these videos are so popular? Obviously, you do a good job. Yes, you're a former pro broadcaster and you're engaging. But there's something about, I think it's the stories. Would you agree?

KEN BUEHLER: We try to do a story, not just this engine was built in 1923 and does 4000 pounds of tractive effort, and it's got 48-inch drive wheels and it's the 480-- we try to stay away from [AUDIO OUT] stories about the men and women who built the railroads that built our great country. And once in a while, if you work it hard enough, it all comes back to the railroad.

CATHY WURZER: A long time ago you told me you're not exactly a railroad guy, but here you are the head of the Railroad Museum. But you are a history guy, though.

KEN BUEHLER: Yes, Cathy. I've always enjoyed history. I share that with a lot of people here. The difference is that I do like railroads, but I'm more of an interest in history in general. And the way I look is there were two different Americas. There was the agrarian society. You were born, lived, and died within a 25-mile radius in most cases. And then there's today's modern America, industrial [AUDIO OUT] a worldwide power.

And the transition between those two Americas was pretty much the railroads. The cross [AUDIO OUT] country was the first transcontinental railway allows [AUDIO OUT] products and more importantly ideas to be shared over long distances. And that I think united America and made America strong and was the transition between the different Americas. They wanted more than the one we grew with railroads.

CATHY WURZER: We're having some problems with your phone line here, Ken, just for your information. I'm curious. When you look at in the museum is a lovely, lovely museum. It looks like a small town for folks who've not been in it. You've got it really well laid out. What's the most popular display at the museum, do you think?

KEN BUEHLER: I think it all depends what you're most interested in. A lot of our exhibits are open to the public, which means you can climb up and sit in the engineer's seat. You can get up in the cupola of a caboose and get behind the controls of the rotary snowplow. And for kids have a museum and have jungle gym. For parents, I think they like history, artifacts. If you're into fine dining, certainly golden age of railroading do that in the dining cars of the railroads and cars you mentioned in the beginning of your introduction here has a great collection of some very [AUDIO OUT] fine and silver pieces from the golden age of eroding dining cars.

The old [AUDIO OUT] most powerful locomotive built 6,000 horsepower steam engine almost as united or the union big boy, I think is a great place. And we've just redone our back. We were behind the fresh air that was dirty and dangerous. And with the last two years, relaying all the bricks in new lighting and doing some different displays that they're almost doubling the size of what you can see now to visit the likes of these and others.

CATHY Well, I'll tell you what my friend, I'm waiting for a video tour of a bar car. Is that coming?

WURZER:

KEN BUEHLER: Well, we have several very nice first class cars on our North Shore scenic railroad. So if you come here, the museum is the best part of the experience because this is a place where you can see the train and ride the train. And our North Shore scenic railroad passengers from downtown to the historic Union Depot where the museum is.

You step up the back door and you get on our North Scenic Railroad and you go through downtown Duluth, go through [AUDIO OUT] the ground zero for tourists and, of course, along the shore of Lake Superior with just the lake walk bringing you from the greatest of the great lakes, Lake Superior. And then up along the North Shore through the majestic [AUDIO OUT] and different trips to the side and back for our run or our [AUDIO OUT] train in the evening about half hour ride and seeing our full day trip all the way up to two harbors, where you end up in that beautiful little community nestled on the shore that is right along Highway 61. [AUDIO OUT]

CATHY That's right. That's right, exactly. And our friends in Nayef River appreciate you coming through with that train.

WURZER: See, Ken, thank you so much. I wish you all the best.

KEN BUEHLER: Well, thank you very much, Cathy. It's a great [AUDIO OUT]. Thank you for the opportunity, and we certainly invite everybody to come to the Lake Superior Museum in Duluth. Visit us, ride our trains, have a wonderful experience. And then whatever you do, tell your friends and neighbors just what a great time you had.

CATHY We will. Thanks, Ken. Ken Buehler is with the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth.

WURZER:

[MUSIC - PAPA MBYE, "ONLY RIGHT"]

(SINGING) Can't make no promises

Empty will solace in forsaken honest sins

Do you recognize that song? It's one of Minneapolis artist Papa Mbye most famous tracks called *Only Right*. Papa Mbye grew up as a prolific cartoon artist and stepped into music a few years ago. He's received an impressive welcome. His tracks have more than 250,000 listeners on Spotify. If you're a *Minnesota Now* listener, you know we love music. Papa Mbye is joining us now to talk about his music and what's inspiring him lately. Papa Mbye, welcome to the show. How are you?

PAPA MBYE: I'm doing very, very good. It's hot outside.

CATHY Yeah, it's going to get hotter. My friend, it's going to get much hotter. Say, your first EP was released last year.

WURZER: Are you happy with the reception of it?

PAPA MBYE: Oh yeah, I'm happy that it's out in general. I was in my infant stage when it came to music when I made it, and it's taught me a lot, and it's brought me places where I never would have thought I'd have been.

CATHY
WURZER: Let's talk a little bit about that. Now, I mentioned that you're a cartoonist and you're a good cartoonist. What was the transition like from being a visual artist to a musician?

PAPA MBYE: Oh, it wasn't too hard, because a lot of the visual art I was doing was rooted in collaboration, especially close to the pandemic. And with music, it's the same way. When COVID hit, I just started getting into making music and met some friends who were already very good at it. And I would just follow their lead and I would just learn from watching them.

I was simultaneously learning and creating at the same time, and it turned into making an EP and getting connected with against giants and it becoming a career.

CATHY
WURZER: Wow, hey, let's talk a little bit about some of the songs on the EP. Let's talk about *Passenger* specifically. First, I want to listen to a little bit of it.

[MUSIC - PAPA MBYE, "PASSENGER"]

(SINGING) Waiting for the day to go back

Antsy for the way to go

Taking all the change, it's all bad

Sad to say you never know

Take out, take out your rocket now

A lot of layers there. How did you put together that track?

PAPA MBYE: Well, it was actually after the first EP. Me and Zak Kahn, who's one of my best friends and collaborators, we had a lot of conversations about in life, whether you're in the driver's seat or the passenger seat and what situations you have to switch in and out of it. A few months later, we just ended up making this song from like 3:00 AM to 9:00 AM, this kind of stream of conscious creation. By the time it was like 9:00 AM, the song was done basically. We went to sleep for a little bit and started working on it again.

CATHY
WURZER: Wow. Hey, I'm thinking you're probably a person who's used to being in the driver's seat. Am I right?

PAPA MBYE: I feel like it's always switched, because like I myself don't drive. I actually am scared to get on the road. So it's interesting to take the driver's seat in life but not literally drive. It almost makes me feel like it contradicts itself.

CATHY
WURZER: Yeah, exactly. Let's talk about who you're listening to. I understand you've been listening to the song *Lily* by the artist Choker. I want to listen to a little bit of that.

[MUSIC - CHOKER, "LILY"]

(SINGING) Because I don't know how to change it

All outside, all outside

All I got

All outside

What do you like about that track?

PAPA MBYE: I love the layers. I love the writing. It has the shape-shifting structure to it. It's not conventional song structure, and he's just really just taking you many different places within the three minutes at the song is playing.

CATHY How did you discover the song?

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: I found Choker online maybe a few years ago just because friends were posting him. He came out the gate with this album that he just dropped on Spotify I think in 2018. And yeah, a bunch of my friends had found him. And the thing is a lot of people thought he sounded like Frank Ocean and the tone of his voice does sound like Frank. And I started listening to him and I fell in love with the music, especially the writing and the melodies.

CATHY I want to listen to another song. It's called *As In a Mirror* by the artist Youssou N'Dour.

WURZER:

[MUSIC - YOUSOU N'DOUR, "AS IN A MIRROR"]

[NON-ENGLISH SINGING]

Papa Mbye, can you say that Youssou is one of your musical influences?

PAPA MBYE: Oh, yeah. I'm from the Gambia in Senegal. I'm actually an immigrant. I came to America when I was about two years old, and a lot of the music I was listening to as a kid was music from those places, Youssou N'Dour and N'dongo Lo. In that song in particular, I remember being a kid and I would always listen to the live performance, because he used to do a concert called Bercy every year in Senegal.

And every single DVD that would come out of that concert, I would always just wait for this song. And I actually rediscovered it a few months ago because I was just singing the melody to my parents and my sisters trying to figure out what the song was and I finally found it. And I love the sentiment of it just because it's in Wolof. And he said, [SPEAKING WOLOF], which roughly translates to the way I live and what I gather in this life returns to me as a mirror. Yeah, I think it's just a really beautiful sentiment.

CATHY Yeah, it is beautiful. Other musical influences, what would you say?

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: Like I said, N'dongo Lo. He is also a Senegalese artist. He's probably one of my favorite artists ever. I also love, love, love, love Frank Ocean. I think he's amazing.

CATHY I like him too.

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: As of late, I've been listening to a lot of J Paul, been listening to a lot of Choker, been listening to a lot of Sylvan Esso. I think they're amazing. And honestly, my favorite artists are just people coming out of Minneapolis right now. I feel like the Minneapolis scene at this point it's going to change music in the next few years.

CATHY You think so?

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: I know so for sure. It's literally no doubt in my mind.

CATHY What's next for you? I'm curious.

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: I got a new single followed by a new EP hopefully late summer or September.

CATHY Good. And when that's dropped, I want you back on the program.

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: All right, cool.

CATHY I think we should go out to more *Passenger* is what I think. That's what I think.

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: Let's do it.

CATHY All right? Papa Mbye, thank you so much for your time.

WURZER:

PAPA MBYE: Thank you.

[MUSIC - PAPA MBYE, "PASSENGER"]

CATHY That was musician and visual artist Papa Mbye, who's based in North Minneapolis. You can find his music online on YouTube and Spotify. You heard some of the music that inspires him from artists like Choker and Youssou N'Dour. We have links to their music on our web nprmusic.org *Minnesota Now* section. Check that out when you have an opportunity.

WURZER:

So glad you joined us here on the program. I had a good time. If you're looking for other bits of information about the show, maybe you had questions about the North Shore Railroad Museum, that particular interview with Ken, the phone line a little shaky. Sorry about that. Technology is always an issue. But if you're looking for more information, check out the North Shore Railroad Museum online. Other information you heard, you can always go to minnesotanow@nprnews.org.

Around the region right now it's raining. In International Falls, it's 61 degrees, a little rain across northern Minnesota. Duluth harbor it's sunny and 57, over the Hill it's 68 at the airport, Rochester sunny skies and 78 degrees. It's 85 in Worthington, 81 in Austin and Albert Lea, 80 in the Twin Cities, 16 Bemidji.

It is a windy day in portions of southwestern and Western Minnesota, wind gusts around 50 miles an hour. There is a wind advisory posted for the rest of the day there. The chance of showers and thunderstorms is really in the forecast for much of northern Minnesota, the northern half today. Some of those storms by the way could become a little heavy. So keep it here for further information. Thanks for listening.