

Hot night & cool classics



Chris Flynn / The Forum

Dennis Cerkowniak from West Fargo drove his 1957 Chevy to the West Fargo Cruise Night on Thursday, June 19, 2025. Cerkowniak said he bought his Chevy, not shown, in 1970. "It was just a regular car then," he said.

Wohlers' walkway

New path in Ottertail, Minn., dedicated to young man killed in hit-and-run

BY KEVIN WALLEVAND
WDAY

OTTERTAIL, Minn. — This weekend on Otter Tail Lake, family and friends of Tyler Wohlers will gather to help dedicate a walking path in his memory.

Wohlers, 21, was killed by a hit-and-run driver as he and friends walked on "traffic-heavy" Minnesota Highway 78 near Ottertail in 2019. No arrests have been made in the case. But now, a special paved walking path is there, designed to protect those who walk to popular fishing holes, all in Wohlers' memory. Family and friends raised \$178,000 for the path, and the state chipped in \$55,000.

Thursday was a perfect morning on Otter Tail Lake. Above the big lake, a bright sun and, of course, summer tourist traffic on Highway 78 just off Otter Tail Lake. Near the public access is a reminder of the tragedy that took the life of Wahpeton's Wohlers in the



Abby Makay / WDAY

Tyler Wohlers, 21, of Wahpeton, N.D., was walking with friends on Minnesota Highway 78 near Otter Tail Lake in Minnesota when he was hit by a vehicle and killed in 2019. The driver has never been found. Friends and family, along with state agencies, raised money to put in "Wohlers Walkway," which will make it safer for those walking near the access and fishing spots.

early hours of July 6, 2019.

"There were six of them. Six young men," said Bernie Steeves, a family friend. "They were walking to Pelican Bay (across the highway from Otter Tail Lake) and they were walking on the highway, and you know how dark this road can be, and he was struck by a car and killed."

Nobody has been arrested. But since Wohlers' death, family and friends have raised money and met with city and state leaders to get a new walking path built just off a busy, and at night, very dark, State Highway 78 south of Ottertail.

"It is a great feeling that in the future no one else will be hurt or killed

on the highway, now we have a trail for everyone to use," Steeves said.

The city of Ottertail has a new series of connecting paths that will now include Tyler Wohlers Memorial Walkway.

"It is going to be perfect for tourists coming here, and it is just a fantastic trail," said Ottertail Mayor Ronald Grobeck.

And family and friends did such a good job raising money, there is now enough money to maintain the trail for years to come.

State Sen. Jordan Rasmusson, R-Fergus Falls, worked with state agencies to get the green light and greenbacks to make the path a reality.

"This is going to be a lasting legacy to Tyler's

memory, and we are now able to take a tragic situation and make an improvement that will benefit generations to come," Rasmusson said.

On Saturday, June 21, friends and family will honor their much-loved Tyler, just yards from where they lost him. A young man who is remembered for his loving, caring personality. A gentle soul, they said. Now, this effort will look to prevent a similar tragedy from ever happening again.

The trail dedication is set for 11 a.m., Saturday, at the Highway 78 boat ramps on Otter Tail Lake, just south of the city of Ottertail.

Reach WDAY reporter Kevin Wallevand at kwallevand@wday.com.

OPINION COLUMN

More churn at Valley News Live as top anchor's contract not renewed

FARGO

Turns out the change to Valley News Live's sports department isn't the only personnel news at the Fargo television station.

Topline news anchorman Justin Betti is leaving, too.

In a post on his LinkedIn account, Betti said his contract is not being renewed and he is in search of another job.

"This week I was told by management they will not be picking up the final year of my contract. I'm available for work in December. I'm also available for moves within Gray (Media, VNL's corporate owner) RIGHT NOW! I'm looking for news anchor and/or news management roles," Betti posted last week on the social media site.

Reached via text message, Betti declined to comment.

Betti has been with Valley News Live since December 2021 and is the evening co-anchor alongside Stacie Van Dyke. His LinkedIn account lists four previous stops at television stations after graduating in 2008 from Syracuse University.

Valley News Live is going through some changes.

Sports director Devin Fry moved to a different position at VNL in May and the station did not fill his position. Sports reporter and weekend anchor Eric Moon left the



MIKE McFEELY

station earlier this month under circumstances that are unclear and, despite industry chatter that general manager Ike Walker was going to ax the sports department entirely, an advertisement on the Gray corporate website says the station is seeking a hybrid weekend sports anchor/news reporter.

Translation: VNL is going to have one part-time position dedicated to on-air sports coverage.

It's a far cry from where Valley News Live was when it had a combined sports staff of five full-timers between KVLV-TV and KXJB-TV (VNL is the combination of the two once-separate signals).

It appears, though, that the station will replace Betti. The Gray corporate job site shows Valley News Live is seeking a news anchor/reporter who is "upbeat and talented" (which Betti is, by the way).

The ad says: "Duties/Responsibilities include, but are not limited to: * Anchor and Report * Help write copy for the newscasts * Write copy for valleynewslive.com."



Anna Paige / The Forum

The KVLV studios are pictured on Thursday, June 19, 2025, at 1350 21st Ave. S. in Fargo, headquarters of Valley News Live.

LOCAL BRIEFS

2 men killed in separate western ND crashes

BISMARCK — The North Dakota Highway Patrol reported that two men died in separate weekend crashes in the western portion of the state.

At 11:25 a.m. Saturday, June 14, William Beeter, 23, of Minot, was riding a

motorcycle at a high rate of speed westbound in the 1600 block of 21st Avenue SE in Minot. Beeter lost control of the motorcycle and crashed, suffering fatal injuries.

At 12:03 a.m. Sunday, June 15, a 50-year-old Williston man died in a crash involving a 2021 Polaris RZR utility task vehicle. According to the patrol,

Richard Reidle was driving northbound on 147th Drive NW in Williams County when he lost control of the vehicle. The vehicle left the roadway and rolled. Reidle was killed in the crash while a passenger, 55-year-old Justine Baxter, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, sustained minor injuries. Neither were wearing seat belts.

The Highway Patrol is continuing to investigate both crashes.

6 Fargo businesses fail alcohol compliance checks

FARGO — In a recent spot-check of alcohol compliance by local law enforcement agencies and Fargo Cass Public Health, 81% of Fargo businesses passed.

The checks are conducted to ensure alcohol is not being sold to minors, according to a release from Fargo Cass Public Health.

Of the 32 businesses checked on June 13, six failed, including every Applebee's location in the city.

Those that failed were Chili's Grill and Bar at

3902 13th Ave. S., Bismarck Tavern at 522 Broadway, Empire Tavern at 424 Broadway, and Applebee's Neighborhood Grill and Bar at 2001 16th St. N., 2800 13th Ave. S. and 2350 45th St. S.

It was the first fail in one year for all six restaurants, which comes with a \$500 penalty.

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