

DULUTH News Tribune

Minnesota Newspaper Association's Daily Newspaper of the Year

Unlock digital at duluthnewstribune.com/activate

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023

Hearing to focus on bentonite

By Jimmy Lovrien
Duluth News Tribune

ST. PAUL — Nearly two years after it was ordered by the state's high court, a long-awaited hearing will begin Monday on a key permit for the project vying to become Minnesota's first copper-nickel mine.

The contested case hearing, expected to last through the week, will focus on one aspect of the NorthMet project's permit to mine: wheth-

er bentonite, a clay, will effectively line and cap the project's tailings basin and limit water seepage and oxidation.

For more than two decades, the NorthMet project near Babbitt and Hoyt Lakes has been pursued by PolyMet Mining, which, as of last month, is now NewRange Copper Nickel, a joint venture between PolyMet and Teck American.

The permit to mine is one of several permits

that have been challenged since they were first issued in 2018.

Here's what you need to know about this week's contested case hearing:

Why is there a hearing?

In short, there wasn't enough evidence to prove the effectiveness of bentonite, according to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

In an April 28, 2021 decision, Justice Natalie

Hudson wrote that while the DNR claimed bentonite "has been tested" and "will be effective," its descriptions and "conclusory statements" did not actually include scientific analysis.

"There is no analysis of the scientific basis for the DNR's assumptions," Hudson wrote. "Further, the single study on which nearly all the DNR's findings of effectiveness rely is not in the record."

BENTONITE: Page 9



Steve Kuchera / 2017 file / Duluth News Tribune
Plans for PolyMet include building dams to increase the storage capacity of tailings basins. One would be built in the distance to raise the basin on the right to the level of the area on the left.



Jed Carlson / Superior Telegram

Molly McManus, left, co-owner of North Yoga, Susan Polege, center, business manager, and Ann Maxwell, co-owner of Yoga North, do variations of Warrior pose in their new space Wednesday.

Duluth to cut trees at Brighton, Enger

Staff reports

DULUTH — As the city prepares to reconfigure parts of Brighton Beach's Kitchi Gammi Park and the Enger Park Golf Course, trees will be removed in coming days.

About 100 trees will be cut down at Brighton to make way for the relocation of a storm-battered shoreside road that had received numerous repairs in recent years. Efforts are underway to stabilize Brighton's shore, move the roadway further inland to prevent future damage and to bring new amenities to the park. The targeted trees include about 75 Scotch pines, 20 trees of assorted varieties and five dead trees.

In a news release issued Friday, the city said it intends to plant "many new native and climate-adapted trees and shrubs throughout the park."

Meanwhile, at Enger Park Golf Course, several trees will be taken out to make way for the construction of a new, larger-capacity pond to be used for irrigation.

Work also will continue to remove dead and dying boulevard ash trees, as the invasive emerald ash borer continues to take a heavy toll on the species. The city says it will replace these trees with saplings of other varieties on a one-for-one basis, but they will take a while to grow to maturity.

YOGA NORTH MOVES DOWNTOWN

By Brielle Bredsten
Duluth News Tribune

Duluth

After 28 years, Yoga North moved from its longtime Lakeside neighborhood location at St. Michael's Lakeside School to its new home at 310 E. Superior St.

Yoga North will begin scheduling classes and private sessions regularly in April.

"We're so excited for this new location, accessible entrance for all, proximity to the medical buildings to share yoga therapy, a lovely view of the lake during class, and visible signage on the

street!" Yoga North wrote in its e-newsletter.

Yoga North is partnering with Cheryl Fosdick, owner of CF Design, to share its new downtown building owned by AtWater Group. Yoga North is accessed through the CF Design entryway.

Situated in the back

of the building in Suite 125C, the 500-square-foot studio features soft lighting, 11-foot ceilings and rubberized yoga flooring. Parking is available along the street and in the nearby parking ramps.

YOGA: Page 4

Proposed Minn. paid leave program comes with big startup costs

By Christopher Magan
St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL — Minnesota Democrats' ambitious two-year budget plan — with \$17.9 billion in new spending — includes the creation of a paid family and medical leave program that has hefty startup costs.

The joint budget targets announced by Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party leaders

include nearly \$670 million to kick-start the benefit program. But a fiscal analysis by the nonpartisan Legislative Budget Office found getting the program up and running could cost as much as \$1.7 billion.

The high costs are largely to allow the state to begin paying benefits around the same time it starts collecting revenue from a new 0.7 percent payroll tax. The tax on wages

could be split between workers and employees.

The state Department of Employment and Economic Development would have to hire more than 400 workers by 2026 to administer the program, which proponents say would look a lot like Minnesota's unemployment system. Only about 24 percent of workers currently have access to paid leave and 13 other states

have some type of benefit requirement on the books.

Measure draws supporters, opponents

The proposal is controversial with a bevy of supporters and critics. A broad coalition of unions, faith groups and health advocates back the new system while businesses large and small have criticized the measure as an unnecessary

mandate and a new tax.

"This program does not create a need for leave; that need already exists," said Sen. Alice Mann, DFL-Edina, the chief sponsor of the bill, during a Thursday committee hearing. "This bill simply changes the way we treat people when they go on leave so we keep families in Minnesota economically stable."

STARTUP: Page 4

HOW TO REACH US

News tips: (218) 723-5300
Home delivery: (218) 723-5252
(800) 456-8080

CONTENTS

Comics 7
Classifieds 9-10
Games 6
Obituaries None
Opinion 3

WEATHER, PAGE 8

Today
Mostly cloudy
High: 37 Low: 14

Tomorrow
Mostly cloudy
High: 29 Low: 8

WWW.AGOBRIEN.COM (218) 729-9662



A.G. 'BRIEN

VOTED DULUTH'S BEST OF THE BEST
PLUMBING CONTRACTOR
4 YEARS IN A ROW!

