

Duluth News Tribune

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

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GREEN DIVIDENDS



PHOTOS BY AMANDA ODESKI / NEWS TRIBUNE

Rick Dale (left) of Bayfield Township, and his son, Chris Dale, of Washburn, Wis., cane a field of raspberry bushes in late August at their farm, Highland Valley Farm in Bayfield Township. Rick Dale and his wife, Janet, started their farm 30 years ago. They grow blueberries (above, left) and raspberries (above, right), and harvest honey and maple syrup. Rick Dale says he enjoys living on the farm because he likes the hard work, but it's his work, not for someone else. "It took a lot of sacrifice," he said of getting the farm to this point. "You feel like you've done something with your life. We've accomplished something."

Bayfield farmer's sustainable practices keep land healthy, family fed



BY WILL ASHENMACHER
NEWS TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

BAYFIELD — Don't call Rick Dale an organic farmer. His blood pressure couldn't take it.

When it comes to the berries he grows at Highland Valley Farm in rural Bayfield, Dale said he'll always take the most organic route possible. But he'll also defend the judicious use of agricultural chemicals. Vigorously, if necessary.

On a recent tour of the 50-acre farm he runs with his wife, Janet, Dale hoisted a 12-pound package of Serenade, an organic fungicide, onto his shoulder

and slapped it for emphasis.

"This runs us almost 10 times what a conventional fungicide would run us," Dale said. "But it's a commitment we make to our customers and our neighbors."

In cases like Dale's, farming purely organically and succeeding economically are mutually exclusive.

"Rick had a goal of becoming organic, but in his situation it would've been too much of a risk," said Bob Olson, business manager for the sustainable agriculture group Food Alliance Midwest, which recently honored Dale with an award.

The use of agricultural chemicals,

even as rarely as Dale employs them, means Dale can't call himself an organic farmer. Still, organic farming practices are largely his way of working.

"He would not adopt a farming practice that would harm his farm," Carlson said. "He loves that place."

Bayfield has declared itself an Eco-Municipality, meaning it emphasizes an existence based on treating its environment and economy sustainably. Even in such an area, Dale stands out.

Bayfield Mayor Larry MacDonald said he hears good things about all the farms around Bayfield, but Dale is

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STATE SELECTS I-35W BUILDER

BRIDGE COLLAPSE: Officials say two companies from Colorado and Seattle had the best — though not the cheapest — proposal.

BY MARTIGA LOHN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. PAUL — The companies came from out of state, they bid the highest and their planned timetable was more than two months behind the competition.

But Flatiron Constructors Inc. and Manson Construction Co. emerged Wednesday as the joint winner of a lucrative contract to rebuild the Interstate 35W bridge, thanks to a state formula that looks at more than cost.

Officials used a formula that balanced speed and cost of construction with other factors including quality, aesthetics and public relations.

"We might pay a little more, but when we do that, we feel we get a little better approach," project manager Jon Chiglo said.

Flatiron/Manson bid \$233.8 million, with a timetable of 437 days. The bid from the Colorado and Seattle companies was in the range of the expected rebuilding cost, between \$200 million and \$250 million. But other bids ranged as low as \$176.9 million, and that bid — from C.S. McCrossan Inc. of Osseo, Minn. — also came with the shortest construction schedule, just 367 days.

The deal isn't done yet — state officials and Flatiron/Manson still have to negotiate and sign a final contract. That's scheduled to happen before Oct. 15 so construction can begin.

Drawings and other details weren't immediately released. Kevin Gutknecht, a spokesman for the state Department of Transportation, said the data wouldn't become public until a contract is signed.

Flatiron apparently hasn't worked for the Minnesota Department of

Inside

Find out more about the other contractors that submitted bids.

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Tying the knot? Odds are it will fail

MARRIAGE: For the first time since WWII, more than half of American couples split within 25 years.

BY SAM ROBERTS
NEW YORK TIMES

Don't stock up on silver anniversary cards. More than half the Americans who might have celebrated their 25th wedding anniversaries since 2000 were divorced, separated or widowed before

reaching that milestone, according to a Census survey released Wednesday.

For the first time at least since World War II, women and men who married in the late 1970s had a less than even chance of still being married 25 years later.

"We know that somewhere between 40 percent and 50 percent of marriages dissolve," said Barbara Risman, executive officer of the Council on Contemporary

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Online

What do you think is the problem? Post a comment at duluthnewstribune.com.

Rain causes headaches, but region still dry

BY JOHN MYERS
NEWS TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

A slow storm from Monday night into Wednesday morning dumped up to 8 inches of rain north of the Iron Range and almost four inches in parts of the Twin Ports, flooding roads in Itasca County and causing

sewage overflows in Duluth.

The rain, coupled with a similar storm Sept. 6, has increased September rainfall totals to almost 16 inches in some areas of northern St. Louis and Lake counties, the National Weather Service in Duluth reported.

Rainfall totals across the Northland ranged from

2 inches in Hermantown to more than 8 inches, with the heaviest rain in a band from Itasca County across Lake Vermilion into Lake County.

While the Weather Service reported about 2 inches over the 36-hour storm near the Duluth International

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Iraqi leader blasts Blackwater

WAR: One Iraqi official accuses the U.S. contractor of helping a government minister escape from jail.

BY LEILA FADEL
MCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

BAGHDAD — Blackwater security guards who protect top U.S. diplomats in Iraq have been involved in at least seven serious incidents, some of which resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said Wednesday.

Al-Maliki didn't detail the incidents, which he said add to the case against the North Carolina-based security firm. Blackwater's license to operate here has been revoked while U.S. and Iraqi officials investigate a shooting Sunday that Iraqi officials now say left at least 11 people dead.

But Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammed al-Askari told McClatchy Newspapers that one of the incidents was former Iraqi Electricity Minister Ahyam al-Samarrai's escape from a Green Zone jail in December. Al-Samarrai had been awaiting sentencing on charges that he had embezzled \$2.5 billion that was intended to rebuild Iraq's decrepit electricity grid.

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2004 FILE / ASSOCIATED PRESS

A private guard protects the U.S. administrator in Iraq, Paul Bremer. There are few signs U.S. agencies are enforcing a growing web of rules governing such contractors.



AL-MALIKI: Said the U.S. security contractor has been involved in seven serious incidents in Iraq, some involving civilian deaths.

Inside

Senate defeats plan to give troops more rest time.

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