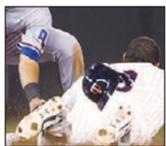


# The Bemidji Pioneer

Rangers  
edge  
Twins



Sports, Page A6

Today's forecast



High 82° Low 58°  
Weather, Page A5

MINNESOTA DNR

## Crews battle fire



MONTE DRAPER | BEMIDJI PIONEER

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fire bombers stationed in Bemidji were called in to combat the 65-acre wildfire southwest of Cass Lake on Wednesday afternoon.

Brush from 2012 storm fueled flames near Cass Lake, officials say

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CASS LAKE — Aerial water tankers and helicopters aided local fire crews in dousing a 60-acre wildfire south of Cass Lake on Wednesday afternoon.

The fire was reported at about 1:30 p.m., witnesses told the Pioneer. Officials used both aerial and ground efforts to combat the fire. A firefighter staging area was manned by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources personnel at the Pike Bay Town Hall near Cass County Junction 22.

“There’s an awful lot of mixed pine and blowdown from the July 5 storm two years ago,” said Greg Nelson, DNR Regional Director. “It will eventually break down but could take up to 10 years.”

The DNR took the lead on what Nelson described as a state fire. The fire was originally reported as two fires that may have merged located south of 156th Street NW, across the street from Cass Lake Bena High School. Witnesses said schools were evacuated.

FIRE, Page A10



MONTE DRAPER | BEMIDJI PIONEER

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources firefighters guard a fire line to make sure the blaze would not cross state Highway 371 south of Cass Lake on Wednesday afternoon.

VETERANS

## National VFW leader visits Bemidji

Thien praises local members for continued support of veterans, current military members

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BEMIDJI— Veterans stood at attention Wednesday as the top brass of the Veterans of Foreign Wars visited Bemidji.

William Thien, the national commander in chief of the VFW, accompanied by Frank Presfield, the state commander, visited the Bemidji American Legion to visit with veterans about pressing issues that are currently being faced by the organization.

In his speech to Post No. 1260, Thien told members the VFW is a “bottom up organization” that is important to helping veterans.

“What you do at the local level, your community service, and all the work that you do at the local level, that’s what makes the VFW the organization it is today,” Thien said.

Thien praised the Ladies Auxiliary for their continued support of soldiers who are serving overseas. He told of a group of local Lady Auxiliary members who are still putting together care packages for soldiers.

“America is still at war. Most of America has forgot this nation is still at war, but I can tell you this, the Ladies Auxiliary hasn’t forgotten.”

The national commander also spoke about how important local members were in fighting the sequestration of 2013 and the government shutdown. Thien said the ability of the veterans to stick together helped change the minds of politicians in Washington.

“Some knucklehead — some knucklehead apparently in Washington, D.C., — decided since the government shut down, we can’t pay death gratuity benefits. Are you kidding me? That’s what they said, but when I put that alert out, within 48 hours you changed their mind.”

Thien’s visit to Bemidji is part of a four-day tour through Minnesota, visiting 20 VFW posts. The

VFW, Page A10

MEMORIAL

## Author, poet, rights activist Maya Angelou dies at 86

COLLEEN JENKINS AND BILL TROTT  
Reuters

WINSTON-SALEM N.C. — American author and poet Maya Angelou, whose groundbreaking memoir “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” earned her international acclaim with its unflinching account of rape and racism in the segregated South, died on Wednesday at age 86.

The prolific African-American writer, known for her lyrical prose and regal speaking voice, died quietly at her home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Angelou’s family said in a statement. No cause of death was given.

Major League Baseball had planned to honor her in Houston on Friday as part of the Civil Rights Game festivities, but Angelou announced last week that she would be unable to attend due to health reasons.

Angelou, who was also a civil rights activist, playwright, actress, singer, dancer and professor during her varied career, penned more than 30 books and won numerous awards, including the country’s highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of



JIM YOUNG | REUTERS

Poet Maya Angelou speaks during a ceremony to honor South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu with the J. William Fulbright Prize for International Understanding Award in Washington in this Nov. 21, 2008 file photo. Author and poet Maya Angelou has died at age 86 in North Carolina, local media reported Thursday.

Freedom, from President Barack Obama in 2011. Her latest work, “Mom & Me & Mom,” about her mother and grandmother and what they taught her,

ANGELOU, Page A3

POLITICS

## Value of GOP endorsement soon to be tested

BILL SALISBURY  
AND DOUG BELDEN  
St. Paul Pioneer Press

The Minnesota Republican Party’s process for endorsing candidates is at a tipping point.

The 2,200 delegates to the GOP state convention this weekend in Rochester must show they can endorse candidates for governor and U.S. senator who are capable of winning elections. If they don’t, future contenders likely will skip the cumbersome route of courting party activists and jump directly into primaries.

“This may be the year when the Republican endorsement process is given a burial,” said Larry Ja-

INSIDE

DFL to open low-key convention with an eye to engaging voters. Page A3

cobs, director of the University of Minnesota’s Center for the Study of Politics and Governance.

But first, the GOP delegates will decide two wide-open races with multiple candidates seeking endorsements for governor and U.S. senator. Then the value of the convention’s blessing will be tested.

GOP, Page A10



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Good Morning,  
Anthony Kotla, Cass Lake  
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Informing the Bemidji area and North Central Minnesota since 1896

CLASSIFIEDS.....A8-10  
COMICS.....A11  
DEAR ABBY.....A2  
OBITUARIES.....A3  
OPINION.....A4  
SPORTS.....A6-7  
STOCKS.....A3  
WEATHER.....A5