

Gophers: Turnaround from loss needed as they face Akron. **B1**



Vikings: Backup QB Carson Wentz to get the ball Sunday. **B3**



Concerts: Phoebe Bridgers milks moody aura in arena show. **A3**



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ST. PAUL CITY HALL

Report clears mayor of harasssment

Her still reprimanded, faces conditions; police chief filed complaint in spring

By Mara H. Gottfried
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An outside investigation into St. Paul's mayor did not substantiate allegations that she "engaged in sexual harassment of any city employee," but found she "engaged in offensive and inappropriate behavior," according to a summary released Friday by the mayor's office.

Mayor Kaohly Her "created and shared offensive material" and "created an uncomfortable work

Page A10: Read the text of Mayor Kaohly Her's response to report.

environment for city employees," Kamaria Kassim, St. Paul's human resources director, wrote in a Thursday letter to Her.

But the investigation did not substantiate allegations that Her "sent inappropriate text messages to city employees, other than with two employees," "made sexual noises while exercising at a city facility" or "retaliated against any city employee," Kassim wrote.

St. Paul Police Chief Axel Henry, who filed the workplace conduct complaint against Her, was notified Thursday via a letter from Kassim that the investigation was done as of Monday.

"I take my responsibilities as Mayor and as a community leader seriously," Her said in a Friday statement. "That is why I cooperated fully with the independent investigation conducted for the City of St. Paul regarding the allegations against me. I did not respond to these allegations publicly because I respected the process initiated by the City. ... I am deeply disappointed

See HER on Page A10



Then St. Paul mayor-elect Kaohly Her listens to staff at Battle Creek Recreation Center during a December tour of Ward 7 in St. Paul.

JOHN AUTEY — PIONEER PRESS

Election 2026

LET THE BALLOTING BEGIN



Alan Goldfarb, who said he will be out of town for the general election, casts his ballot Friday on the first day of early voting in Minnesota at the Elections & Voter Services building in Minneapolis. Early voting also began Friday in Virginia and South Dakota, with more states soon to follow. On Thursday, Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon urged people not to be swayed by stories they might have seen or read that cast doubt on election operations. They would be able to vote "just like they always have," he said.

Story, Page A7. ELLEN SCHMIDT — ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS

Officer in ICE raid pleads not guilty

Christian Castro faces federal charges of lying to FBI

By Tim Sullivan
ASSOCIATED PRESS

An immigration officer pleaded not guilty Friday to federal charges that he lied to the FBI about being attacked before he shot and wounded a Venezuelan man during the immigration crackdown in Minneapolis early this year.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer Christian Castro appeared before a U.S. magistrate judge in St. Paul after prosecutors indicted him this month on six federal counts of making false statements about the Jan. 14 shooting of Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis.

Castro, in a black suit and with an electric monitor visible at his ankle, said very little during the hearing. He was suspended without pay by ICE earlier this year.

See CASTRO on Page A10

LAKEVILLE

N.Y. man charged in \$670K swindle

St. Paul victim's daughter credited; case seen as part of complex scheme

By Nick Ferraro
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After an older St. Paul man fell victim to a \$670,000 scam last week, his daughter called FedEx to try to intercept the two cashier's checks he sent to a Lakeville address through overnight delivery. She was told the checks were out for delivery, and could not be stopped.

Lakeville police did surveillance of the address, a 1940s rambler that was recently sold and vacant. A man pulled up near the house in a black BMW X5 with New York license plates, grabbed a parcel from the front porch and drove off, court documents said.

Officers stopped the car and detained the man, Hong Zhang, a 40-year-old Chinese national from Queens, N.Y.

The next day, Dakota County prosecutors charged Zhang with one count of aiding and abetting felony theft by swindle in connection with the Sept. 10 incident, which police believe is part of a scheme that stretches far beyond Lakeville.

Search warrant filings said investigators have seized uncashed cashier's checks totaling more than \$2 million, bank deposit slips and other evidence



Zhang

of a "large complex fraud scheme believed to be orchestrated overseas."

No one else has been arrested, Lakeville Police Chief Brad Paulson said Friday, adding, "We're likely only scratching the surface of this group."

Authorities are working to identify other victims from multiple states, Paulson said, adding federal authorities have helped in the criminal investigation.

Zhang traveled to the state solely to "swindle hundreds of thousands of dollars from innocent victims," prosecutors said in a Sept. 11 court filing while arguing for \$1 million bail.

See SCAM on Page A10

AI

Microsoft, OpenAI workers worried about 'theft of labor'

Evidence in newspapers' lawsuit shows possible admission of plagiarism

By Karen Weise and Mike Isaac
NEW YORK TIMES

Newly unsealed court documents showed considerable concern within Microsoft and its close partner OpenAI over the use of millions of news articles to develop artificial intelligence systems.

As OpenAI was forging ahead with its work, Microsoft employees debated whether what OpenAI was doing represented the "largest theft of labor in human history" and could create a "doom loop" that could ultimately threaten

the quality of the large language models they were building.

"Millions of people around the world will soon consider large models 'hoovering up' all their work to be an astonishing theft of unprecedented proportions," said one internal Microsoft document from 2023.

Inside OpenAI, there was also worry that its ChatGPT chatbot could lead people away from reading news elsewhere. In a June 2023 memo, Nick Turley, who led the team developing ChatGPT, wrote that AI posed an "existential threat" to publishers. And in February 2024, he wrote that AI products "will get more and more substitutive as they get better."

See AI on Page A8