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YOUR LEADING SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS IN EAU CLAIRE AND THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY SINCE 1881

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Older drivers killed more often, study says

FRONT PAGE

Several factors contribute to Wisconsin having highest rate for fatal crashes with elderly motorists

ASSOCIATED PRESS | March 17, 2018

MADISON — A study shows Wisconsin has the highest rate for fatal crashes involving elderly drivers in the country.

The study conducted by TRIP, a national transportation research group, found 26 percent of fatal crashes in Wisconsin in 2016 involved someone 65 years or older.

That's despite the state having a lower percentage of older drivers compared to many states.

"A lot of Americans 65 and over are very active, and it's critical they maintain that as long as they can safely do so. But what we recognize at the same is a significant increase in the number of traffic fatalities that are occurring," said Frank Moretti, TRIP director of policy and research.

David Pabst, safety director for the state's Department of Transportation, told Wisconsin Public Radio that it's "an alarming statistic" and "a serious problem."

But he said people ages 65 to 70 generally have good driving skills and few accidents. They also travel fewer miles.

Elderly drivers' health is more fragile so they're more likely to have serious or fatal injuries in a crash. Pabst said people should decide whether to continue driving based on their vision, muscle dexterity, reaction time and any medical conditions.

"We need to encourage people to get cars that work for them as they age," said Pabst.

Nearly a quarter of Wisconsin's population is estimated to be 65 or older by 2040.

"It is important we consider this demographic shift and its impact on safety and mobility," said Mark O'Connell, executive director of the Wisconsin Counties Association. "This means more user-friendly roads for those able to drive and public transportation or shared-ride services for those who cannot, or choose not to drive themselves."

The report also recommended improving road safety by making signage lettering larger and brighter, lengthening merge lanes, and hosting education and training programs for older drivers.

NCAA UPSET
No. 1 seed Virginia falls in 1st round; No. 4 Wichita State loses
SPORTS, 4D

SPORT SHOW
Annual celebration of outdoors bigger than ever in ninth year
YOUR REGION, 1B

High 47
Low 22
Today's forecast details: 9C

LET INSIDE

CITY SITES MAY SOON BE SOLD



EAU CLAIRE officials will soon consider selling a plot that's been home to a north side fire station, as well as two lots of vacant land that also are located on the north side. Page 1B

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ALSO INSIDE
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No endorsements
Housing inspectors gauge condition, don't give advice. Page 1C

INDEX
Area Bridge 6C
Art 12C
Business 8C
Classified 5C
Community 2C
Homes 12C
Obituaries 2B
Opinion 4A
Public notices 8C
Regions 1B
Religion 4A
Sports 12C
Sudoku 9C
TV/Dish Ability 12C
Weather 8C
Whole world 9C

TOMORROW
Juniors at UW-EC start new student organization

See TARIFF Page 8A

See DRIVERS Page 2A

See COLLEGE Page 2A

Decision 2018: West-Central Wisconsin Trouble for the GOP?

No need to panic over recent election wins by Democrats, area Republican official says, but local political observers speculate that GOPers will face a host of challenges this fall

By CHRIS VERRILL
Leader-Telegram Staff

Republican Rick Saccone in a district that President Donald Trump carried by 20 points, two years ago. On Feb. 27, two state legislative seats, in New Hampshire and Connecticut, flipped from Republican to Democratic control, making 39 Democratic seat pickups nationwide since Trump won his election in November 2016 — including Democrats Party Schachtner of Somerset winning a special election in west-central Wisconsin's 10th Senate District over GOP state Rep. Adam Jacobus of Balsam Lake. Republican Sheila Harndorf had held that seat for 17 years. Trump won the district by 17 points. So, are area Republicans in trouble this fall? After Schachtner won, Gov. Scott Walker said it was "a wake-up call for Republicans." Harndorf had won the seat in 2016 with 63 percent of the vote. Schachtner carried it with 58 percent support. See GOP Page 2A

Tariff talk chills many in D.C.

Trump's possible action against China brings loud protests in U.S.

By LISA MASCOLO
and IAN BOSS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is considering sweeping tariffs on imports from China, with an announcement possible as early as next week. And that has industry groups and some lawmakers scrambling to prevent the next front in a potential trade war that could reverberate across the U.S. economy.

Early indications from the White House have officials braced for tariffs across a wide variety of consumer goods, from apparel to electronics, and even on imported parts for products made in the U.S. The size and scope remain under debate, but the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is warning that annual tariffs of as much as \$60 billion on Chinese goods would be "devastating."

Trump's focus on China could be even more consequential, both at home and abroad, than the recently announced penalty tariffs on steel and aluminum. And amid the staff turmoil at the White House, it's being read as a sign of

See TARIFF Page 8A

MCDONELL PLAYS FOR D5 TITLE



The Chippewa Falls McDonell student section goes into a frenzy after a basket in Friday's WIAA Division 5 state semifinal game against Deerfield at the Kohl Center in Madison. McDonell won 56-46 to advance to today's boys title game. The No. 3 seeded Macks (18-10) face top seed Bangor (26-1) at 11:05 a.m. for the D5 state championship. FRIDAY'S GAME DETAILS 1D

Rapid building technique gets scrutiny after bridge collapse

MIAMI — As the 950-ton concrete bridge section was swung into place over a highway last week, Florida International University officials were bemoaning with pride. "It's about building bridges and student safety. This project accomplishes our mission beautifully," FIU President Mark Rosenberg boasted that day. "We are filled with pride and satisfaction at seeing this engineering feat come to life and connect our campus to the surrounding community." Five days later, the bridge collapsed onto the busy six-lane highway, crushing cars and killing at least six people in a tragedy now under federal investigation. While it's not yet clear See COLLEGE Page 2A

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