

Weather Corner



National Weather Service

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 39. South wind around 5 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 74. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 44. South wind around 5 mph.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 76. West wind 5 to 15 mph becoming south.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 44.

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 72.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 42.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 67.

Tuesday Night: A slight chance of rain and snow. Partly cloudy, with a low around 33. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Wednesday: A slight chance of rain and snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 55. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Wednesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 56.

Thursday: High, 77; Low 36
Precip: Thursday, 0:00
Month: 3.54
Year: 19.92

Fire hydrant gusher closes intersection



Evan Barnum/COLBY FREE PRESS

Water gushing from a broken fire hydrant got the attention of people near Eighth Street and Country Club Drive on Thursday night. Police said tracks indicated a semitrailer truck cut the corner about 7:30 p.m., running over the hydrant. The driver left the scene. City employees worked for over two hours trying to shut off the gusher, finally bringing in a truck-mounted pump after portable pumps failed to drain the hole. The intersection was closed for the weekend. Chris Bieker, director of public works, (above, right) and Jason Shepherd watched while Chad Applebury tried to locate the control valve for the hydrant.

Tougher times are still ahead

WASHINGTON (AP) — Beat-down and watching their wealth shrink, Americans are burrowing ever deeper — cutting back on spending and spelling more trouble for the sinking economy.

One of the biggest problems saddling the country is damage from the housing market's collapse. Mounting foreclosures, falling home prices and soured mortgage investments are taking their toll on both individuals and businesses alike.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, who is scheduled to speak via satellite today at a Berkeley, Calif., conference on the mortgage meltdown, is likely to call on government officials and lawmakers to keep working on ways to provide more relief.

The Bush administration is considering a plan that would help around 3 million struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure by having the government guarantee billions of dollars worth of distressed mortgages. The plan also could include loan modifications that would lower interest rates for a five-year period.

Fallout from the housing melt-

down has spurred the worst global credit and financial crisis in more than a half century. To combat the problems, the government has taken a flurry of bold steps. The Treasury Department is pouring \$250 billion into banks in return for partial ownership and the Fed this week started buying mounds of debt from companies. It also slashed interest rates to 1 percent, a level seen only once before in the last half century.

A new batch of economic reports out today is likely to offer fresh confirmation of the stresses weighing on American consumers. Income growth is expected to barely budge in September, inching up just 0.1 percent, according to economists' estimates. Consumers probably trimmed their spending during the month by 0.3 percent, economists predict.

And, given the weak jobs market, employers aren't expected to be overly generous with compensation to their employees. Workers' wages and benefit costs are expected to rise 0.7 percent dur-

ing the third quarter, economists are forecasting. If that happens, it would mark the same size increase from the previous quarter.

All in all, the economy as a whole contracted at a 0.3 percent pace in the July-to-September quarter, reflecting a sharp pull-back by consumers. They cut back spending by the largest amount in nearly three decades, the government reported Thursday. Consumers' disposable income took its biggest drop on records dating back to 1947. Retailers are bracing for a grim holiday buying season.

Economists say tougher times are still ahead. Believing consumers are cutting back even more right now, they predict a much larger economic decline — anywhere from a 1 to 2 percent rate — during the current October-December period. That would meet a classic definition of a recession — two straight quarters of shrinking GDP.

The grim news comes just days before the nation picks the next president.

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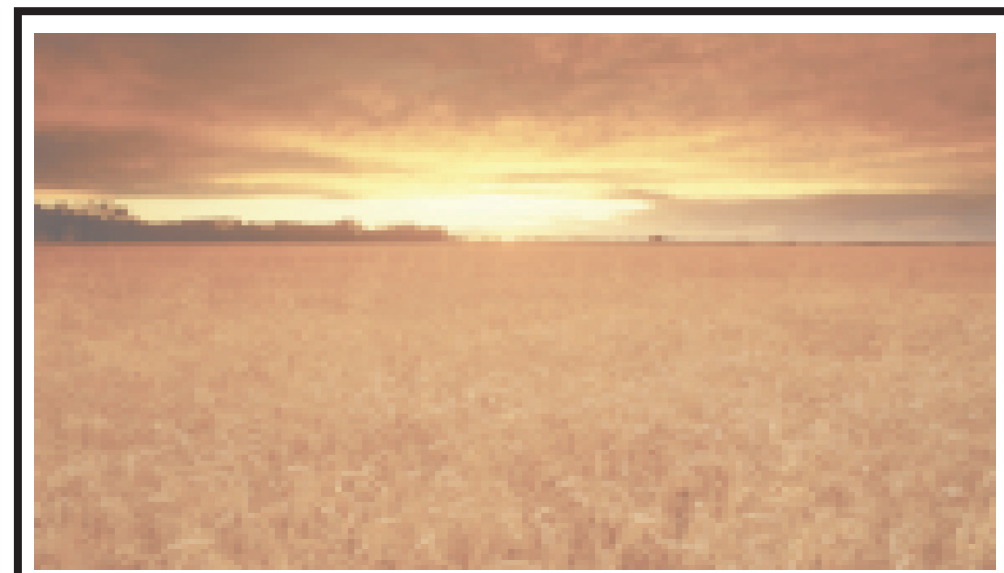
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As a reminder, my name will **not** be on the ballot, only my opponent's. You must write my name, **MIKE BAUGHN**, on the blank line under "For Sheriff", as well as darken the **OVAL** to the left. The **OVAL** must be darkened in order for the vote to count.

Remember, my name does not need to be spelled correctly. However, it needs to be close enough for the voter's intent to be understood.

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