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# PIONEER PRESS

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2012

★ CLASSIFIED, 6-8D

**VOTE 2012: MINNESOTA REPUBLICAN CAUCUSES >> 85% REPORTING**

<b>Rick Santorum</b>	<b>Ron Paul</b>	<b>Mitt Romney</b>	<b>Newt Gingrich</b>
<b>45%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>

## Santorum on a roar



PIONEER PRESS: BEN GARVIN

The auditorium at Lakeville North High School is filled to capacity at the start of Tuesday evening's Republican caucuses. After the Pledge of Allegiance, voters broke up into small groups by precinct. For more photos from caucus night, go to [photos.TwinCities.com](http://photos.TwinCities.com).

He wins here. He takes Missouri and gets a late victory in Colorado. Look out, Romney, the resurgent ex-senator has laid claim to the GOP base.

By Bill Salisbury  
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Minnesota Republicans helped put Rick Santorum back in the presidential hunt Tuesday night, giving him a huge win in their precinct caucus straw poll.

Ron Paul ran a strong second, while Mitt Romney was a distant third, a poor showing for the national front-runner for the GOP nomination. Newt Gingrich was in fourth place.

Santorum's victory, combined with a win in the nonbinding

Missouri primary and another win in Colorado, is almost certain to prolong the Republican nominating contest and make the former Pennsylvania senator, not Gingrich, the conservative alternative to the more moderate Romney.

Speaking in Missouri, Santorum said the votes there and in Minnesota "were heard loud and louder all across this country."

The Minnesota results marked a reversal for Gingrich, who had been Romney's strongest challenger.

**A good night: Santorum's resurgent candidacy, 6A**

Santorum spokesman Hogan Gidley told the Pioneer Press his candidate's strong showing makes him the biggest threat on Romney's right.

"Head to head, man to man, Rick Santorum, polls show, is the better candidate to beat Barack Obama because he offers a clear contrast, and he offers a clear contrast to Mitt Romney," Gidley said.

Santorum's Minnesota triumph was more symbolic than real, however.

He won bragging rights in the state but no national convention delegates.

The GOP straw poll was a non-binding "beauty contest," which means it didn't determine how many delegates the candidates got.

Minnesota Republicans will elect their 37 national delegates at their party's state and con-

SANTORUM WINS, 6A >

## Feds say Xcel nuke plant spills pose no risk

Two radioactive leaks reported at Prairie Island since November

By Tad Vezner and Leslie Brooks Suzukamo  
Pioneer Press

Radioactive water has spilled from Xcel Energy's Prairie Island nuclear power plant near Red Wing, Minn., on two recent occasions, according to notifications the utility sent to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission this month.

On Monday, Xcel Energy said a 27-gallon leak containing traces of radioactive tritium occurred Friday. That spill occurred two days after Xcel officials told the commission that a similar but much larger spill had happened in November.

Xcel spokeswoman Mary Sandok said there was no danger to the public or the plant's employees.

She said tritium was "a very low, energy-emitting radionuclide" and that Xcel's groundwater-monitoring program had detected no increases in the element.

NUKE PLANT, 5A >

### Prairie Island spill

A 27-gallon radioactive water leak occurred Friday at Xcel Energy's Prairie Island nuclear plant.



PIONEER PRESS

## Witness: SUV driver didn't look like Senser

Affidavits unsealed in hit-and-run case

By David Hanners  
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Although prosecutors contend Amy Senser returned to the scene of her fatal hit-and-run about 40 minutes later to survey the damage, a witness who thinks she saw the woman's vehicle described a driver who looked markedly different, according to search warrant affidavits unsealed Tuesday.

Senser was 45 and had brown hair at the time of the incident, but the eyewitness described a driver who was about 30 and had "light colored hair," according to the affidavits.

Senser, wife of former Vikings player-turned-restaurant Joe

HIT-AND-RUN CASE, 9A >

## Gay marriage fight step closer to Supreme Court

By Adam Nagourney  
New York Times

LOS ANGELES — A federal appeals court panel ruled Tuesday that a voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage in California violated the Constitution, all but ensuring that the case will proceed to the

U.S. Supreme Court.

The three-judge panel issued its ruling in San Francisco, upholding a decision by Judge Vaughn Walker, who had been the chief judge of the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California but has since retired.

The panel ruled that Proposition

8 — passed by California voters in 2008 by a margin of 52 percent to 48 percent — violated the equal protection rights of two same-sex couples that brought the suit. The proposition placed a specific prohibition in the state constitution against marriage between two people of the same sex.

But the 2-1 decision was much more narrowly framed than the sweeping ruling of Walker, who asserted that barring same-sex couples from marrying was a violation of the equal protection and due process clauses of the Consti-

GAY MARRIAGE, 10A >

## Now, only Allie and Semo remain

Minnesota Zoo mourns its fifth dolphin death since 2006

By Jessica Fleming  
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The Minnesota Zoo's latest dolphin addition — 1½-year-old calf Taijah — has died after a sudden illness, zoo officials said Tuesday.

Preliminary results from an animal autopsy showed there

**Animal talk: It's World Language Day at the zoo, 1B**

was an ulcer in Taijah's stomach, but zoo officials were unsure what caused it.

Until final results are available, the zoo's remaining dolphins will be under constant

observation.

Taijah's death Monday night stunned zoo workers and reduced the zoo's already meager dolphin pod to two — Taijah's parents, 24-year-old Allie and 48-year-old Semo.

It's the fifth dolphin death in

DOLPHIN DEATH, 5A >



MINNESOTA ZOO

Taijah, an 18-month-old calf, was a Minnesota Zoo crowd-pleaser that thrilled her trainers with her ability to learn quickly and entertain.

