

'75 blizzard state's top news for year

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two deadly and destructive blasts of weather — the "Super Bowl" blizzard and the Red River Valley rainstorm — have been selected as Minnesota's top news stories of 1975 by The Associated Press.

The vote by the news cooperative's newspaper and broadcast members in Minnesota, gives the top spot to the winter blizzard and second place to the summer storm.

Rounding out the top 10, in order, were the Reserve Mining Co. environmental trial; Sen. Hubert Humphrey's ascent as a presidential contender; violence at Stillwater Prison; teacher strikes; Charles Stenvig's return as Minneapolis mayor; the 3M Co.'s illegal political contributions; the derailed propane tankers in Fertile, and the Republican party's name change.

Leading the list, though, was the blizzard that hammered the state from Jan. 10 to 12. Dubbed the "Super Bowl" blizzard, since it occurred while the Vikings were meeting Pittsburgh in the football extravaganza at New Orleans, the winter storm paralyzed the state.

Upwards of a dozen deaths were blamed, directly or indirectly, on the blizzard. Hundreds of travelers were stranded, and cattle were buried in drifts so deep that some carcasses weren't found until the spring thaw.

Not so deadly but even more damaging was the rainstorm that deluged northwestern Minnesota over the Fourth of July holiday. Fertile farm land was covered by more than a foot of water, and crops were ruined. Losses were estimated in excess of \$100 million in Minnesota alone, and were even worse in North Dakota.

The Reserve case named top story of 1974 in Minnesota was in the news most of this year again as U.S. District Judge Miles Lord ordered the Silver Bay firm to shut down rather than continue dumping taconite tailings into Lake Superior. Lord was overruled by an appeals court, however, and as the year ended the appeals court was deciding whether to allow Lord to continue on the case.

Humphrey, vowing all the way he wouldn't enter any presidential primaries but would accept a draft by the Democratic National Convention, picked up considerable support as the new year approached. Humphrey apparently will be in the middle of his party's election of a presidential candidate.

Outbreaks of violence at Stillwater Prison, including the stabbing death of one inmate during a fight and the strangling of another who allegedly was an informant, prompted a legislative investigation that is continuing.

The teacher strikes came in a flurry in December. Walkouts occurred at Winona, Roseau, Howard Lake-Waverly, Luverne

Stenvig's upset victory over incumbent Democrat Al Hofstede in the Minneapolis mayoral race was a huge surprise to most everyone, including Hofstede. Stenvig, the police officer who ran as an independent, returns to the office he held for two terms.

3M's legal troubles over political contributions continued in 1975. The firm and two former officers were handed charges for failing to pay federal income taxes on the money illegally contributed to politicians.

Residents of Fertile were evacuated as railroad workers cleaned up derailed tank cars carrying highly combustible propane. No one was hurt, but a lot of residents were scared.

The state GOP decided at its convention that the name "Independent-Republicans" might attract more voters, so it adopted that new name.

Close behind the top 10 stories were a handful of others that attracted a lot of votes. They included the earthquake that rattled dishes across central Minnesota; the visit of Norway's King Olav; passage of the handgun registration bill and its enforcement; discovery of high levels of PCBs in fish taken from Lake Pepin and the Mississippi River; Buhl's fiscal problems that almost meant a winter without coal to heat its homes and businesses; the canning lid shortage, solved partially by a distribution plan centered in Minneapolis, and the Internal Revenue Service's decision not to allow Humphrey to use his vice presidential papers as a tax write-off.

WORTHINGTON, MINN.
CLOSE
D. 16,200

JAN 2 1976

MONS 032977