

**STATE DIGEST**

**S.D. Attorney General Warns Of Census Scams**

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakotans are being cautioned about a scam circulating under the guise of a 2010 Census form. The state attorney general's office says official-looking requests for financial information are not part of the Census. Scam artists have sending letters and e-mails and even showing up at homes seeking Social Security numbers and information about bank accounts. The attorney general's office says the Census does not ask for that information, and residents should not give it out. The Census seeks information on the number of people living in a residence and details about their race and sex, along with the type of residence and a telephone number.

**S.D. Regents Want Time To Study Budget**

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents has delayed a decision on college tuition and fee increases next year. Regents CEO Jack Warner says officials want more time to study the impact of the state budget the Legislature passed this week. The \$1.2 billion state budget included significant cuts to some areas of state government to eliminate a \$43 million shortfall, including cuts to the state's higher education system. The Board of Regents met Wednesday in Aberdeen but delayed a decision on tuition and fees until April 15. Warner says the budget cuts will force the board to raise tuition and fees beyond what it wanted.

**Huron Physical Therapist Pleads Guilty**

HURON (AP) — A Huron physical therapist accused of bilking Medicare, Medicaid and Blue Cross Blue Shield has pleaded guilty to making false statements. Fifty-five-year-old Reed Hittle faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine when he is sentenced June 21. He already has agreed to about \$119,000 in restitution. Authorities say Hittle for 3 1/2 years billed for some treatments that actually were performed by his unlicensed and untrained assistant.

**Trial Pushed Back In Mobile Home Shooting**

HURON (AP) — The trial for a Sturgis man accused of murder in the 2009 shooting death of Huron resident Ricardo Hein has been pushed back. Jury selection for John LeGrand's trial has been rescheduled for July 26. It had been scheduled for April 21. LeGrand has pleaded not guilty to alternate counts of second-degree murder and first-degree manslaughter. Authorities say he and Hein had fought over money that LeGrand allegedly owed Hein for construction work and that LeGrand shot the 23-year-old Hein four times with a shotgun in a Huron mobile home park.

**Weaker Neb. Prenatal Care Bill Advances**

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Efforts to provide prenatal care to thousands of illegal and legal residents in Nebraska have officially crumbled under the weight of anti-illegal-immigration sentiment. Lawmakers on Thursday instead gave initial approval to a watered-down measure for women who have been abused. It makes clear they can get Medicaid-covered prenatal care even if they don't provide names of the men who abused them, which is often required. Earlier proposals would have allowed thousands of women to get prenatal care. They normally would have been covered under a Medicaid rule Nebraska had incorrectly used for more than 20 years. Some lawmakers vowed to continue looking for solutions after the session ends this month.

**911 Disrupted In Several Neb. Counties**

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Authorities in several southeast Nebraska communities were receiving emergency reports by cell phone and in person Thursday after a technical problem took down 911 service and left many residents without use of their land-line phones. The outage began when a Windstream Communications router in Lincoln — and its backup — failed around 7:45 a.m., company official Brad Hedrick said. That caused 911 outages in David City, Fairbury, Hebron, Lincoln, Pawnee City, Plattsmouth, Seward, Superior, Wahoo and the surrounding areas. Windstream spokesman David Avery said 36,000 customers were affected. In addition to 911 outages, there were some problems with local and long-distance phone service. Cell phone service — with the exception of making 911 calls — and Internet service appeared to be unaffected. State officials said 911 outages were confirmed in 12 counties, including Butler, Seward, Saunders, Lancaster, Clay, Adams, Gage, Jefferson, Cass, Saline, Richardson and Fillmore. Outages also were reported in Nuckolls, Thayer and Pawnee.

**S.D. Dems Skip Senate Race Against GOP's Thune**

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press Writer

PIERRE — South Dakota Democrats have failed to find a candidate to challenge Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune. Democratic Party officials had acknowledged earlier they might not find anyone to run against Thune, a popular politician who is seeking a second term in the Senate. The lack of a Democratic candidate became official Thursday when election officials posted the final list of candidates who submitted nominating

petitions to run for statewide offices and the Legislature in the June primary. State Senate Minority Leader Scott Heidepriem of Sioux Falls, the Democratic candidate for governor, said the party decided not to field a candidate in a futile race against Thune. "We just concluded that John Thune is an extremely popular senator who is going to win another term in the Senate," Heidepriem said. Heidepriem said opting not to run a challenger isn't much different than what Republicans did two years ago, when the

GOP ran candidates without a chance of defeating the Democratic candidates for Senate and House. He said Democrats could benefit by skipping the Senate race. "It will allow us to divert resources ... to races we can actually win," Heidepriem said. Thune was traveling with his family Thursday and couldn't be reached for an interview, said the senator's campaign manager, Justin Brasell. However, the campaign issued a statement in which Thune said he is grateful for South Dakotans' support. He also said he'll

be traveling to help other senators in their campaigns. Brasell said Thune has been helping the South Dakota GOP raise money for its get-out-the-vote effort in the November election. Thune also will help the state's Republican nominees for governor and U.S. House after they are chosen in the June primary, Brasell said. Thune still could face a challenge from an independent candidate. Those not affiliated with a party have until June 8 to file nominating petitions to get on the November ballot.

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