

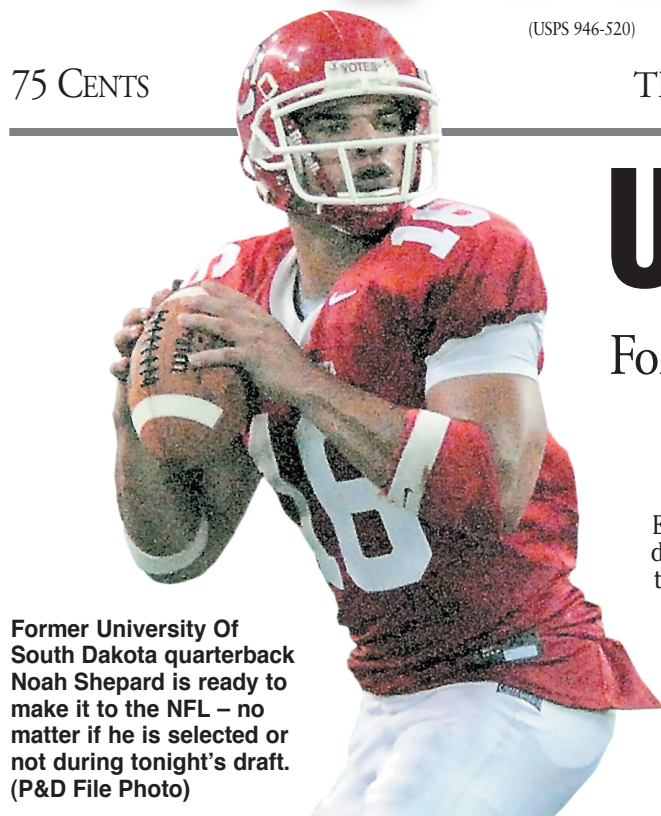
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Former University of South Dakota quarterback Noah Shepard is ready to make it to the NFL — no matter if he is selected or not during tonight's draft. (P&D File Photo)

USD's Shepard Eyes NFL Shot

Former Coyote QB To Chase Dreams, Drafted Or Not

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — There will be no live ESPN feeds nearby when Noah Shepard sits down to watch the NFL Draft, starting tonight (Thursday).

Instead, the former University of South Dakota quarterback will be exactly where he wants to be — with his family and close friends at home in Colorado.

Still, there's an outside chance the 23-year-old will see his name called at the draft, which begins tonight in

New York City.

Regardless of the outcome, Shepard said he left nothing to chance, especially with the potential to still earn a free agent invitation from an NFL team.

"It's been a long, tough process, but I feel really confident right now," Shepard said in an interview Tuesday. "Physically and mentally, I feel like I'm in the best shape."

"I just don't want to take anything for granted at this point."

The USD all-time leader in passing yards (8,936), total offense (11,133) and passing touchdowns (77) has watched his NFL stock rise from a little-known small college quarterback to a potential draft

"sleeper," according to some Web sites.

Some sites list the 6-foot-2, 225-pound Shepard as the 20th quarterback in the draft, but the majority project him anywhere from a sixth- or seventh-round pick to a free agent candidate.

During USD's pro day on March 22 in Vermillion, NFL scouts from Buffalo, Carolina, Denver and Minnesota came to watch Shepard. In that session, Shepard recorded a 40-yard dash time of 4.76 and notched 25 reps on the 225-pound bench press.

And in late March, scouts from the Green Bay Packers came to Vermillion to work out Shepard. The quarterback was later brought out to Wisconsin for a private workout with team officials.

"Some teams have noticed me, especially after

■ USD, Page 3 please

INSIDEtoday



Take Two

■ Mount Marty Sweeps College Of St. Mary In Home Softball Doubleheader. PAGE 11

OUR TOWNS

■ CONSTRUCTION: Crews Return To Finish Highway 50 Road Project. PAGE 7

WEATHER

9 a.m. 3 p.m.
45° 71°
Mainly sunny, increasing clouds late

PAGE 2

INDEX

Weather ..... 2
Region ..... 2-3
Obituaries ..... 3
Viewpoints ..... 4
Life ..... 5
Comics ..... 6
Our Towns ..... 7
Earth Day ..... 8-10
Sports ..... 11-12
Nation/World ..... 13
Classifieds ..... 14-15
Crosswords ..... 15
Midwest ..... 16

RECYCLING

River City Recycling This Week
NORTH of 15th St.



TOMORROW

■ RIVER CITY: YHS Set To Induct More To Fine Arts Hall.



Judge Tosses Some Claims Over Neb. Flag Law

BY TIMBERLY ROSS
Associated Press Writer

OMAHA, Neb. — A federal judge has dismissed claims questioning the constitutionality of Nebraska's flag-mutilation law but said she'll consider arguments over a state law barring protests within 300 feet of funerals.

U.S. District Judge Laurie Smith Camp ruled Shirley Phelps-Roper can raise questions about the flag-mutilation law during her criminal case in state court, so there's no need to hear them in federal court.

Smith Camp based Monday's decision on a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that determined questions of federal constitutionality can be heard during ongoing proceedings in state courts when there's an important state interest and adequate opportunity to discuss constitutionality.

Phelps-Roper, 52, is a member of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., whose members believe U.S. troop deaths are punishment for the nation's tolerance of homosexuality.

She sued state and local officials in December, arguing Nebraska's flag and funeral protest laws, along with a city of Bellevue ordinance requiring permits for things like parades and rallies, are unconstitutional.

Her attorney, Margie Phelps, said an appeal to the judge's dismissal of her client's challenge to the flag-mutilation law was in the works.

"What people need to be real clear on in Nebraska ... is this little church that services God will not bow down and worship your filthy flag — period," Phelps said.

The federal lawsuit followed Phelps-Roper's 2007 arrest during a protest at the funeral of a National Guardsman in Bellevue. Authorities say she let her then-10-year-old son stand on an American flag and she wore a flag as a skirt that dragged

■ FLAG, Page 3 please

CHAMBER GOES TO WASHINGTON



U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson (D-SD) meets with members of the Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce during their annual trip to Washington, D.C. Attendees included (from left to right) Charlie Gross, Nathan Johnson, Dave Knoff, Steve Huff, Ashley Knoff, Carmen Schramm, Nate Franzen, Lynn Peterson, Paul Lowrie and Doug Russell.

Local Group Takes Views To D.C.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a two-part series chronicling the Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce trip to Washington, D.C., April 14-16 to meet with federal officials about issues of interest to Yankton and the surrounding area.

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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Arriving in Washington, D.C., last week for its annual slate of appointments with federal agencies and political figures, the Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce delegation of approximately a dozen people had a lot of issues to discuss and little time to do it.

During two full days of meetings, representatives of the Chamber and the City of Yankton met with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Park Service, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, all three members of South Dakota's federal delegation and more.

The areas of interest were diverse — ranging from a proposed expansion of the National Field Archery Association (NFAA) and Easton Sports Development facility, and changes in the Missouri River related to Gavins Point Dam to finding ways to use the historic South Dakota Human Services Center (HSC) campus.

Among the first and — according to many delegates — most informative meetings took place Thursday with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Representatives of the agency were very familiar with Yankton and excited to find ways to help preserve the historic legacy of one of the oldest communities in what was once Dakota Territory.

Part of that familiarity was due to the fact that the former HSC campus on Yankton's northern edge was named by the National Trust in 2009 as one of the 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in the nation. It also helps that Yankton native Kathryn O'Leary Higgins served as vice president for public policy at the National Trust from 1999-2004 and is remembered fondly by her former co-workers.

"It would be a shame to tear (the HSC campus) down," said Barbara Pahl, director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Mountains/Plains Office, headquartered in Denver. "It is truly irreplaceable. The trick is, how do we come up with a use? That's been a constant struggle for us — finding people who will develop anything in small rural communities."

Pahl, along with other National Trust representatives at the meeting, directed the delegation to potential government funding sources that include Save America's Treasures grants or United States Department of Agriculture money.

Concern was also expressed about the potential that Yankton's downtown post office could be closed. The postal service recently surveyed customers about how consolidating services in the postal service annex building along 25th Street would affect them.

"I'm confident they're going to shut (the post office along Walnut Street)

■ TRIP, Page 15 please

Crofton Teen Dies In Tuesday Night Accident

From P&D Staff Reports

CROFTON, Neb. — A 17-year-old Crofton teen died late Tuesday night in a one-vehicle rollover in Cedar County.

According to a press release from the Cedar County Sheriff's Office, Shawn Potts was pronounced dead at the scene after the 2005 Chevrolet Malibu he was driving left the road on 5552nd Ave. four miles south of Crofton. The incident was reported at 7:18 a.m. Wednesday morning.

Potts was alone in the vehicle and restraints were not used. Alcohol is not believed to be a factor in the accident.

The Cedar County Sheriff's Office responded to the accident, with the Nebraska State Patrol and Crofton Fire/Rescue providing assistance.

The accident remains under investigation.

Sacred Heart Faculty Attend Educational Summit

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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For Sacred Heart School's teachers and administrators, spring break this year was spent on the opposite side of the desk: They became the students.

"Each year the National Catholic Educators Association puts on a national conference," said Sacred Heart principal Regan Manning. "During the conference there are all kinds of different sessions and learning opportunities. There were 22 of us that went — teachers, administration and paraprofessionals — this year."

During the conference, the educators had the opportunity to attend keynote speakers including Garrison Keillor and the Rev. James Martin. The staff participated in liturgy each day and individualized breakout sessions where more defined areas such as curriculum, administrative duties, religion and religious education are addressed.

This is the second time that



Fourth Grade Sacred Heart Elementary teacher Lori Stephenson is pictured with her class. Stephenson and the staff of Sacred Heart Schools recently returned from the National Catholic Educators Association national conference, a conference that they say was invaluable in helping promote the ideals of Catholic education in their school.

the staff as a whole has attended the conference.

"Each year in our school calendar, we have eight days that are set aside for teacher work days and development days for our teachers," Manning said. "We used this week as part of those

professional development days this year."

For the teachers, the opportunity to attend the national convention was an opportunity to grow both as educators and people.

"It energizes you, you get new

ideas about how to teach subjects and how to incorporate teaching in the faith," said fourth grade teacher Lori Stephenson. "It is just good to be together. It is great getting new ideas. For instance I got a new idea on how to supplement my math curriculum. I (also) went to one session where a woman from New York gave a session on how being bullied affects the person and the person who is bullying."

Other classes that Stephenson and second grade teacher Jackie Steffen found uplifting included an interactive rosary class, poetry sessions and an overview on Catholic education.

"I went to a session on how Catholic education has to change to meet the needs of kids today versus how it was in the past," Steffen said. "You want to be sure you are teaching your religious values in all of the classes, not just in religion classes. I went to one on

■ TEACH, Page 3 please