

S.D. Forest Fire Contained; Burns 546 Acres

CUSTER (AP) — Officials say the Black Hills National Forest fire in southwest South Dakota has been contained. The Forest Service says the fire was contained Saturday night, after scorching 546 acres. The agency says no structures were threatened and no injuries have been reported in the Apple Fire, which was started by lightning on Wednesday. It was the largest wildfire so far this season in the Black Hills.

Water For Food Conference Set For Lincoln

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Organizers say the fourth global Water for Food Conference in Lincoln will bring together international experts to explore how advances in science, technology and policy can help feed the world. "Blue Water, Green Water and the Future of Agriculture" is the theme of this year's conference. It is scheduled for May 30-June 1 at the Cornhusker Hotel. Speakers will include Jeff Raikes, CEO, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and Malin Falkenmark, senior scientific adviser, Stockholm International Water Institute. Registration is \$250, which includes all conference events, materials and meals. Online registration and more information are available at the conference website: waterforfood.nebraska.edu/wff2012.

Crop Irritant To Keep Pheasants Away Approved

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — South Dakota farmers have been granted a federal waiver to use a nonlethal repellent to keep pheasants out of corn and sunflower fields. The *Argus Leader* reports it's the fifth year the state Agriculture Department has applied for an emergency exemption to use Avipel. Officials say Avipel doesn't kill pheasants but irritates their stomach and they quickly learn to avoid it. The exemption allows Avipel to be used on up to 1 million acres of corn. Last year, more than 140,000 acres were treated. The waiver also allows sunflower farmers to treat more than 123,000 acres. Last year, nearly 48,000 acres of sunflowers were treated.

North Dakota School Finds Rare Shrew

DICKINSON, N.D. (AP) — Dickinson State University officials say a shrew weighing 5 grams captured in Billings County is a huge find. Biology professor Michael Shaughnessy Jr. tells the *Dickinson Press* that the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History has confirmed that the shrew captured during a research project is the only second of its kind found in North Dakota. Shaughnessy says the other documented specimen of the Merriam's shrew in North Dakota was caught near Medora in 1913. The find was part of an ongoing project involving six students funded by the state Game and Fish Department to survey prairie dog towns.

S.D. Confirms 8th Flu Death Of The Season

RAPID CITY (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Health says two more people have died as the result of influenza, but overall flu activity decreased. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that, for the reporting week ending March 24, the total of influenza-related deaths was eight. The median age of the most recent deaths was 90. Health officials say 401 South Dakotans have had confirmed cases of influenza and 129 of them have been hospitalized. During the 2010-11 flu season, there were 860 confirmed cases in South Dakota. Twenty deaths were linked to the flu.

Work To Begin On Bridge Over I-80 At Minden

MINDEN, Neb. (AP) — Highway construction is set to begin this week on a bridge over Interstate 80 at Minden. The Nebraska Department of Roads says traffic will be reduced to a single lane during the work, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of June.

Iowa Town Serves Up Support For Beef Products

SIOUX CITY, Iowa (AP) — The main producer of the lean beef trimmings that critics call "pink slime" has the support of its home base, but it may have a tougher time with consumers nationwide. Several thousand people attended a picnic in Sioux City on Saturday to support Beef Products Inc. and dine on hamburgers made with its beef. In addition to that gathering — which was near the company's headquarters in Dakota Dunes — several hundred people gathered near BPI's Kansas plant, which suspended production last week. The company's product made from beef trimmings has drawn public scrutiny because of concerns about the ammonium hydroxide it uses to treat the meat, which the company says kills bacteria. Critics say the "pink slime," a term coined by a federal microbiologist who was grossed out by the product, is an unappetizing example of industrialized food production. The product meets federal food safety standards, and BPI says it is safe and has been used in ground beef for more than two decades. The company suspended operations at its plants in Texas, Kansas and Iowa last week because of the controversy, affecting 650 jobs. The company's South Sioux City, Neb.,

plant continues to produce the beef trimmings. The company and industry groups have launched a campaign, including the website www.beefisbeef.com, to defend the product that is officially known as "lean, finely textured beef." But it's not clear whether it will be enough to win back consumers. Major grocers, such as Kroger, have stopped selling products that use the beef trimmings. And McDonald's Corp. announced last year that it would no longer use ammonia-treated beef. In Kansas, the people who gathered in Garden City to support the company were also treated to hamburgers. BPI Quality Assurance Supervisor Eugene Martinez said he and his co-workers are calling politicians and business and using Facebook to combat the bad publicity. "Hopefully we can calm the fears of families," he said. "The rally is just the beginning." At Saturday's gathering at the Tyson Events Center in Sioux City, more than 15,000 people enjoyed hamburgers made with Beef Product's meat. Many wore T-shirts with the slogan "Dude, it's beef." Sioux City resident Jose Lopez said he decided the company's products were safe after

researching it online, so he brought his family to the picnic. "I had heard BPI was injecting stuff that was not nutritious, but I learned it's not true," he said. "For me, it tastes good, it's healthy and it's real beef." Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and U.S. Rep. Steve King joined local officials at the picnic in support of the company. Last week, Branstad toured the company's Nebraska plant with governors from Kansas and Texas and lieutenant governors from Nebraska and South Dakota. The *Des Moines Register* reported Saturday that over the past decade, the company's top executives and employees have given at least \$546,500 to candidates for state office in Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota and Texas. And Beef Product's owners Eldon and Regina Roth have given \$274,250 to congressional and presidential candidates since 2008. Nearly all of that \$820,750 — except for \$28,400 — went to Republicans. Picnic-goers Tom and Debbie Mitchell of Sioux City said the company has been good to the area. "They (BPI) have been good to our community, and we want to support them," Debbie Mitchell said. "I also happen to like their beef."

Sanford Lab Employs 116, Has \$9M Payroll

BY WENDY PITLICK
Black Hills Pioneer

LEAD — The Sanford Lab has 116 full-time employees and a \$9 million annual payroll, according to a recent report. Ron Wheeler, executive director of the Sanford Lab, said in Fiscal 2011 the lab employed 103. By July 1 the lab expects to employ 116. The S.D. Science and Technology Authority fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. However, Wheeler said those numbers can be deceiving, as the Sanford Lab has only added five additional staff members — three hoist operators and two infrastructure technicians — in preparation for rehabilitation work in the Ross Shaft. The other eight additional staff, he said, come from the DUSEL team that once worked under the umbrella of the S.D. School of Mines and Technology. Once the DUSEL preliminary design plans were completed, that staff was transferred to the S.D. Science and Technology Authority to work with the Department of Energy on plans for the Long Baseline Neutrino Experiment, the major experiment planned for the

Davis Cavern at the Sanford Lab, and to support the early science projects such as LUX and Majorana. "The reality is the S.D. Science and Technology Authority has added some of the DUSEL engineering staff, but many of the DUSEL staff that was employed at the University of California-Berkeley have been reassigned by them to other projects," Wheeler said. "So, in reality the total number of people that were working on DUSEL has been reduced." Dr. Kevin Lesko, who lead the charge to build the deep underground laboratory at Homestake, and some other key DUSEL staff and administrative support, have also been picked up by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory to oversee the Department of Energy investment at the Sanford Lab, Wheeler said. Overall, Wheeler reported that the personnel transferred from the DUSEL project to the S.D. Science and Technology Authority are financed with the \$15 million in operating funds, which the Department of Energy is providing. Employees at the Sanford Lab, Wheeler said, reside throughout the Northern Black Hills and in

Rapid City. Most of them call Lead, Deadwood, Central City, Sturgis, Belle Fourche, and Spearfish home. In addition to the 116 full-time employees, Wheeler reported that the Sanford Lab has 20 part-time staffers on its emergency response team, as well as some other part time positions. Contractors and suppliers are also busy at the lab site. The S.D. Science and Technology Authority has spent nearly \$50 million over the last five years with 186 South Dakota vendors and suppliers, and 27 South Dakota contractors. Currently crews from Ainsworth-Benning Construction of Spearfish are completing an \$8 million contract to outfit the Davis Campus, 4,850 feet underground, for early science. Heavy Constructors, of Rapid City, is also working to erect new steel reinforcement for the Yates headframe. Further, Wheeler reported that the Sanford Lab also has 14 research collaborations, 13 that have members from South Dakota institutions, conducting active research at the site. All of those scientists, he said, spend money on food, housing, hotels and recreation while in the Northern Hills.

Motor Home Crash Kills Five In Northeast Kansas

LYNDON, Kan. (AP) — A packed motor home headed from Texas to Minnesota crashed Sunday morning in northeast Kansas, killing five people and sending 13 others to hospitals. The Kansas Highway Patrol said the northbound vehicle was filled with 18 people and pulling a trailer when the driver lost control at 9 a.m. on Interstate 35. The vehicle hit a guardrail and a concrete bridge rail before crashing into a creek ravine near the small town of Williamsburg, which is located about 70 miles southwest of Kansas City, Mo. Debris was strewn around the crumpled Freightliner box truck, which had living quarters inside. Trooper Don Hughes said the fatality victims included adults and children. The crash is under investigation. Hughes said he couldn't immediately release the names, ages or hometowns of the victims because their relatives were still being notified. Hughes said the vehicle was not registered in Kansas but would not confirm where its license plates had been issued.

Temps

From Page 1

degrees in 1968;

- March 19, overnight low of 54 degrees, breaking the mark of 45 degrees from 1918;
- March 20, overnight low of 46 degrees, breaking the mark of 42 set in 1935;
- March 22, high temperature of 51 degrees, breaking the mark of 49 degrees set in 1935;
- March 26, high temperature of 84 degrees, breaking the mark of 80 degrees set in 1998.

The unusually open winter contributed to the rash of record warm March temperatures, Hanko said. "We didn't really have much snowpack across most of the Plains. When you don't have snowpack, it really warms up a lot faster than when you have snow. It may be several degrees higher than normal," she said. "The other part is the upper-level ridge sitting over us. It's deflecting storms basically north and east of us. It's been unusually warm and dry here. But if

you look at Alaska, they're having one of their snowiest winters ever." March 2012 appears to be one for the record books for the region, not just Yankton, Buss said. Speaking to the Press & Dakotan on Friday afternoon, he cited available figures for Sioux Falls. "As of Thursday, we had 21 days with a high of 50 degrees or warmer, and that would be No. 1. The closest to that was 20 days set back in 1910," he said. "And as of Thursday, the March average temperature was 62.6 degrees, which will finish second (in Sioux Falls history). We couldn't catch March 1910, where it was 64.8 degrees for the month." For perspective, Buss pointed to the third highest average temperature for the month of March. "The next closest was 55.1 degrees back in 1968," he said. "That's quite a drop-off, about seven degrees, from what we saw (in 2012)." For Sioux Falls, the average high for Friday was 50 degrees, and the average low was 28 degrees, Hanko said. In contrast, many days in March were 30 and even 40 degrees above normal,

she said. The March records were remarkable not only for the region but also nationally, Hanko said. "We had highs in the upper 80s (and low 90s)," she said. "It was one of the warmest locations in the United States. It was amazing." A front is moving through the region starting today (Monday), Hanko said. "It's fairly weak, and the bulk of the front will go south of us," she said. The front will bring cooler temperatures this week, Hanko said. "There may be some cool-downs, but we are still talking well above normal this time of year," she said. "It will cool down to where the high temperatures are in the upper 50s and lower 60s, which are still above normal. But they feel cooler when you have been talking about highs in the upper 80s and the lower 90s." The April outlook calls for a good chance of above-average temperatures and equal chances of above- or below-normal precipitation. The forecast carries a very little indication of repeating last year's historic Missouri River

flooding, Hanko said. "My general understanding is that they have seen less snowpack than normal (in the Rockies)," she said. "We do not expect any major flooding, at least nothing to the level we had last year. There is always the potential down the road. It was this time last year that we had the period of heavy rain (in the upper basin that ignited the flooding), but it doesn't appear that we will have anything on that scale (in the near future)." While flooding concerns are less, the region continues to monitor the fire index. The region has seen a large number of grass fires, with counties listed in the extreme category and receiving red-flag warnings.

On Monday, a very high fire danger exists along with gusty northwest winds of 25-40 miles per hour (mph) along and west of the James Valley. There is also a chance of thunderstorms Monday, mainly east of Interstate 29. For southeast South Dakota and northeast Nebraska, there is no hazardous weather forecast through Tuesday. The week's forecast calls for a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms Monday with a high near 65 and northeast winds gusting to 34 mph. The chance of precipitation is 20 percent. The rest of the week calls for highs in the low to mid-60s, with a 30 percent chance of precipita-

tion Friday night.



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MORNING COFFEE
WEEKDAYS
MONDAY-FRIDAY

Monday, April 2
7:40 am Yankton County Commission
(Bruce Jensen, Allen Sinclair)
8:15 am YSD Foundation
(Pauline Rhoades)

Tuesday, April 3
7:40 am Yankton Library
(Kathy Jacobs)
8:15 am Hy-Vee Dietician
(Rachel Pinos)
8:45 am Dakota Territorial Museum
(Crystal Nelson)

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