

S.D. Official Says Grassland Fires Contained

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Two grassland fires started by lightning have been completely contained in southwestern South Dakota. The Hay Canyon and Wick fires started separately but merged into one blaze southeast of Hot Springs. Fire Information Officer Beth Hermanson says the fires were 100 percent contained Thursday. KHBH-Radio reports that the two fires burned about 17,667 acres, or more than 27 square miles.

Victim In Rapid City Stabbing Was Pregnant

RAPID CITY (AP) — Rapid City police say an autopsy showed the woman killed in a Walmart parking lot was five weeks pregnant. Thirty-year-old Morgan Myers of Rapid City died after being stabbed several times Thursday. Police say the man who allegedly stabbed her, 30-year-old Michael Young of Rapid City, is hospitalized in critical condition. He was arrested Thursday after being found barricaded in a bathroom at a nearby hotel with what police said were self-inflicted stab wounds. Police say Myers and Young were both employees at Walmart, but Young was fired earlier this month. Myers got a protection order against Young after a romantic involvement. The *Rapid City Journal* reports if Young is released from the hospital, he will be charged with first-degree murder, fetal homicide and violation of a protection order.

S.D. Soldiers Returning Soon From Afghanistan

PIERRE (AP) — The neighboring cities of Pierre and Fort Pierre are preparing for the return of South Dakota National Guard soldiers from Afghanistan. Members of the 200th Engineering Company are to come home the second week of May. KCCR radio reports that members of the unit's Family Support Group plan to decorate the two cities with yellow ribbons to welcome the soldiers home. The 200th is based in Pierre with detachments in Mobridge and Chamberlain. It has about 180 soldiers. They deployed last May for a yearlong mission of bridge work.

Nebraska Department Sets Pipeline Sessions

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality has scheduled four public information sessions along the new, proposed corridor for the Keystone XL oil pipeline. The meetings are part of a state review of alternate route proposals. Pipeline opponents have objected to its original route through the Nebraska Sandhills and the Ogallala aquifer, a massive groundwater supply. Pipeline developer TransCanada has proposed a new, preferred route that runs around the Sandhills region. Department officials have planned the sessions in an "open house" format with tables, detailed maps and an area to submit public comments. The meetings will take place in O'Neill on May 9, Neligh on May 10, Albion on May 16 and Central City on May 17. A public hearing date will be announced later.

Man Sentenced In S.D. For 400 Pounds Of Pot

PIERRE (AP) — An Oregon man caught with nearly 400 pounds of marijuana in South Dakota has been sentenced to six years in prison. The drug charge against 49-year-old Darrell Hughes of Portland, Ore., stemmed from a traffic stop on Interstate 90 near Rapid City in April 2011. Authorities say Hughes had 374 pounds of marijuana in a rental truck. It is the second sentencing in two weeks in South Dakota involving cases with a large amount of drugs. A Massachusetts man caught with nearly half a ton of marijuana in his pickup truck was sentenced earlier this month to eight years in prison. Attorney General Marty Jackley says the 1,300 pounds of marijuana in the two separate cases had a total street value of about \$3 million.

Cattle, Hog, Poultry Receipts Up In S.D.

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Cash receipts were up for both cattle and hogs in South Dakota last year. The value of egg production and turkeys in the state also climbed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says 2011 cash receipts from cattle and hogs in South Dakota totaled about \$2.8 billion, up 13 percent from the previous year. Cattle accounted for 80 percent of the total. In a separate report, USDA valued egg production in South Dakota last year at \$44.5 million, up 18 percent over the year. Hens laid about 700 million eggs. South Dakota producers raised 4.4 million turkeys in 2011. That was down 4 percent from 2010, but the value of production rose about 7 percent to \$123 million.

Dakotas Could See Snow This Weekend

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — It's almost May, but snow is possible in parts of the Dakotas this weekend. The National Weather Service says a slow-moving storm is likely in western and central North Dakota. Forecasters say it will bring thunderstorms and widespread heavy rainfall that could turn into snow. Accumulations are expected to be an inch or less. The weather service says wintry weather also is possible in parts of northern South Dakota, with rain in other areas. Both states have been dealing with strong winds. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that a printing business in Belle Fourche in western South Dakota lost its roof Thursday. In southwest North Dakota, a 14-mile stretch of state Highway 16 was reopened Friday morning after being shut down by a dust storm Thursday night.

Slain Guard's Family Sues S.D. Officials

SIOUX FALLS. (AP) — The family of a slain prison guard filed a lawsuit Friday against the South Dakota Department of Corrections, arguing that negligence by corrections staff led to the death of Ronald R.J. Johnson during a failed escape attempt by two inmates a year ago. KELO-TV reported that the lawsuit alleges Warden Doug Weber, state Corrections Secretary Denny Kaemingk and others disregarded the risk that inmates Rodney Berget and Eric Robert posed to staff in the South Dakota State Penitentiary. State officials declined to comment on the lawsuit. "Officer Johnson's death was very sad, but because of the pending litigation I cannot comment on the lawsuit other than to say it will have to run its course in the courts," Gov.

Dennis Daugaard's press secretary, Joe Kafka, told The Associated Press. Prosecutors have said Berget and Robert killed Johnson by hitting him with a pipe and wrapping his head in plastic wrap as he worked alone April 12, 2011, in a part of the prison where inmates work on upholstery, signs, custom furniture and other projects. Robert put on Johnson's uniform and tried to move a large box toward the prison gate with Berget inside, but the two were caught before leaving the prison. Berget and Robert pleaded guilty and were sentenced to death. South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said a private lawyer has been hired to defend the state in the lawsuit. Jackley said he worked closely with Johnson's family in prosecuting the inmates, so he cannot represent the state in the lawsuit filed by the family. The lawsuit argues that prison officials not only moved Berget and Robert out of the maximum-security area of the prison, but also knew the two inmates were plotting an escape attempt that involved killing an officer. Robert had a 903-page file at the prison and a previous escape attempt, according to the lawsuit. Berget had been in and out of prison since he was 15 and had at least seven escapes or attempted escapes on his record. The lawsuit said prison officials violated policy by not housing Berget and Robert in a maximum-security area and instead allowing them to work jobs and have free movement within the prison.

Nebraska Auditor Questions Spending By Gretna City Officials

GRETNA, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska state auditor's office has questioned spending by city officials in the west Omaha suburb of Gretna.

State Auditor Mike Foley sent a letter dated Thursday to City Council President Jason Stahr, raising concerns about the use of city credit cards, possible nepotism and what he called was the city's lack of financial controls. A letter released under Mayor Sally McGuire's name said Foley had raised some legitimate concerns that will be addressed. But, McGuire said, she viewed some contents of Foley's letter as an attack on the city and she emphasized that "not one penny of taxpayer money held by the city of Gretna was missing or misappropriated." City Attorney John Green said Friday that he had met with Sarpy County's chief prosecutor to review Foley's letter and said no criminal charges were being contemplated. In general, Foley said, the city didn't have adequate controls to review spending and reconcile various statements. Foley said his auditing team found several instances in which city administrator Colleen Lawry used her city card for personal purchases. Even though she paid back the city, Foley said, state law bars such purchases. Lawry's travel spending also was criticized as being excessive, and Foley said she neither provided

itemized receipts for much of it nor adequate documentation to show the travel and expenses were necessary.

The auditor also raised a question of nepotism regarding the hiring of Lawry's daughter to work as a receptionist for the city clerk and whether the council properly reviewed and approved the hiring and documented their votes for the public. McGuire said the allegations of nepotism were wrong. "When extra help is necessary," she said in her letter, "the city has not excluded the children or relatives of city employees to work at lower-paying, temporary part-time or seasonal work."

On Friday, Lawry referred email and phone messages to Green. Green said Lawry was "apologetic for putting the city in this position." "The mayor says she (Lawry) has been a great asset for the city," Green said. Green echoed the mayor regarding Lawry's reimbursing the city for personal purchases on her city credit card.

"We didn't have in our personnel policy manuals something that prohibited" the credit card use criticized by Foley, Green said. A change of the card policy and changes to reflect Foley's recommendations will be presented to the City Council at its meeting next week, Green said.

Wounded Knee Conference Sees Heated Exchange

BY KRISTI EATON
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — American Indian Movement founder Clyde Bellecourt lashed out at the son of a former FBI agent who was in charge during the Wounded Knee takeover in 1973 during a conference Friday meant to foster reconciliation.

The exchange took place when John Trimbach was talking about the book he and his father wrote, "American Indian Mafia." His father, Joseph, was the special FBI agent in charge of the region when AIM activists took over the village of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation for 71 days. "The FBI wanted to kill us. The FBI brought in all the military branches from the United States federal government," Bellecourt said during the annual Dakota Conference at Augustana College.

During one of the conference's panel sessions, John Trimbach focused on what he called a hidden side of the uprising in which activists were beaten, raped and killed. He claimed the crimes were condoned by AIM leadership. At various points during the speech, Bellecourt stood up from his front-row seat and waved an affidavit that he said proved Joseph Trimbach wanted to kill American Indians and lied about investigations. "In this document, Mr. Trimbach was chastised many times

as head of the FBI in Minneapolis for falsified affidavits," Bellecourt said. "This has all been proven. You were sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

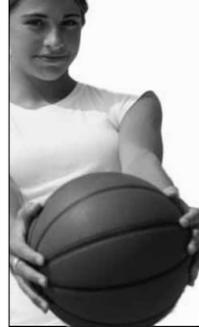
Bellecourt founded AIM with Dennis Banks and others in the late 1960s to protest the U.S. government's treatment of American Indians and demand the government honor treaties with tribes.

One of the group's most well-known events was the 71-day armed takeover of Wounded Knee to protest government corruption.

The exchange was one of many emotional moments at the conference's session examining key questions from the takeover.

At one point, the widow of civil rights activist Ray Robinson broke down in tears as she pleaded with anyone with information about her husband to come forward. Ray Robinson disappeared during the occupation in 1973. His body has never been found, though he has been declared dead.

Buswell-Robinson said she's not looking for arrests or prosecutions. She insisted that she simply wants to know where her husband's body is located so that she could bring his remains home for a proper burial. Copies of a black-and-white photo of Robinson from 1973 were handed out to audience members.

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