

Parts Of The Dakotas Brace For Snowstorm

SIoux FALLS (AP) — An early spring snowstorm is in store for parts of the Dakotas early this week.

The National Weather Service has posted various advisories and warnings in the two states. Forecasters expect the heaviest snow in South Dakota, with a foot or more falling in some areas by Wednesday morning, accompanied by winds gusting up to 40 mph.

Parts of southwest North Dakota could see 8 inches of snow.

Freezing rain also is a possibility in both states.

Meteorologist Taylor Trogdon in Aberdeen tells the American News that while it's getting late in the season, snowstorms in April aren't rare.

Cold Weather Affects Farmers In Eastern SD

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Continued below normal temperatures limited the ability for fieldwork in eastern portions of South Dakota.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says in its weekly crop report that farmers and ranchers had 3.1 days suitable for fieldwork. Activities included caring for livestock and preparing for spring planting.

Winter wheat conditions were rated 47 percent very poor, 28 percent poor, 22 percent fair, 3 percent good and 0 percent excellent.

Calving was 50 percent, while lambing was 73 percent complete.

Three percent of cattle have been reported as moved to pasture.

Cattle and calf conditions were rated 1 percent very poor, 3 percent poor, 25 percent fair, 65 percent good and 6 percent excellent.

Aberdeen Man Claims \$10K Hot Lotto Prize

ABERDEEN (AP) — An Aberdeen man has claimed a \$10,000 Hot Lotto prize.

Lottery officials say Paul Kleine matched all five white ball numbers but missed the Hot Ball to win the game's second prize in the March 30th drawing.

The odds of winning it are one in about 608,000.

Hot Lotto is played in 13 states including both Dakotas, as well as the District of Columbia. The jackpot sits at more than \$4 million for the next drawing, on Wednesday.

Attorney Bows Out Of Case Against GI Mayor

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — The city attorney for Grand Island says he'll hire another lawyer to handle the prosecution if the City Council proceeds with a misconduct charge against Mayor Jay Vavricek.

Section 2-24 of the city code covers the removal of elected city officials, and it specifies that the city attorney would be the prosecutor. But City Attorney Bob Sivick told *The Grand Island Independent* on Sunday that he would have to decline a lead role in the process.

"It's not just sticky; it's a clear conflict of interest," Sivick said. "The way this provision of the code is written, it requires me to prosecute one of my clients, the mayor, on behalf of another one of my clients, the city, while a third client, the City Council, sits in judgment."

Grand Island Councilman Mike Paulick filed the misconduct charge Friday with Sivick. It cites Vavricek's drunken-driving arrest on March 2 in nearby Howard County. Vavricek pleaded no contest to reckless driving and was fined \$500.

Paulick said he brought the charge after getting calls from constituents upset over the mayor's arrest.

Sivick said he's lined up an attorney from the Omaha suburb of Ralston, Greg Abboud, to do the job if the council decides at its meeting Tuesday night to move forward against the mayor. Abboud gained more than 12 years' experience as a deputy Douglas County attorney before starting a private practice.

The council's approval isn't necessary to hire Abboud, Sivick said, because the authority is already granted to the city attorney under provisions included in another section of the city code.

It says "city attorney may hire outside counsel on matters in which the city attorney lacks expertise or in which the city attorney has a conflict of interest."

City

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choose to enact it at seven-day or 30-day intervals, for example, but the ordinance could be rescinded at any time conditions change.

Violating the ordinance could lead to a maximum \$200 fine. The city could also choose to terminate water service to the offender.

After having a variety of questions answered, the commission set a public hearing on the proposed ordinance for April 22.

"I'm hoping we don't have to enact it, but we want to have it in place in case we need it," Goodmanson said.

In other business Monday, the commission:

- approved an agreement with

the South Dakota Department of Transportation to transfer ownership of the Meridian Bridge to the City of Yankton. The action is part of the agreement that was made for the renovation of the bridge into a recreational trail. If, at some point in the future, the city no longer wants the bridge, the state has \$2.8 million in an interest-accruing account set aside to demolish it;

- awarded a \$34,900 contract to Layne Christensen for the Paddle Wheel Point horizontal collector well investigation. The project will include three two-inch PVC vertical test wells that are approximately 100 feet deep; and
- awarded a \$649,131 bid to Masonry Components for State Transportation Improvement Program projects.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage

Johnson Now Backs Gay Marriage

BY CHET BROKAW
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — South Dakota Sen. Tim Johnson, who announced his retirement last month, has reversed his position on gay marriage, saying Monday that he supports the legalization of same-sex unions.

The 66-year-old Democrat has said for years that he doesn't support gay marriage, and he voted for the 1996 federal law that defined marriage as the union of a man and woman and provided that a state did not have to recognize same-sex marriages from other states.

"After lengthy consideration, my views have evolved sufficiently to support marriage equality legislation," Johnson said in a written statement. "This position doesn't require any religious denomination to alter any of its tenets; it simply forbids government from discrimination regarding who can marry whom."

His announcement leaves three Senate Democrats who have not come out in support of federal



Johnson

efforts to legalize gay marriage: Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, Mark Pryor of Arkansas and Joe Manchin of West Virginia. Landrieu and Pryor are up for re-election next year in their Republican-leaning states.

Johnson's position announced Monday is at odds with state laws passed in 1996 and 2000 banning gay marriage and saying South Dakota would not recognize same-sex marriages from other states.

Voters passed a state constitutional amendment in 2006 saying only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid.

Johnson, the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, announced March 26 that he would not seek re-election in 2014, partly because the effects of a life-threatening brain hemorrhage in 2006 had made speech and mobility difficult.

In 2005 and 2006, Johnson said he did not support gay marriage but also that he did not sup-

port an amendment to the U.S. Constitution introducing a specific ban. He also noted in January 2005 that he had voted for the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act protecting state laws on marriage.

Former state Rep. Roger Hunt of Brandon, a Republican who was involved in state legislative efforts to ban gay marriage, said Johnson's support of a federal law legalizing gay marriage runs counter to the constitution's guarantee of states' rights.

"I think families are so important, a family between a man and a woman is so important," Hunt said.

Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin issued a statement Monday praising Johnson's decision.

"Sen. Johnson has affirmed what a majority of Americans across the country believe — that committed and loving gay and lesbian couples deserve the right to marry," Griffin said.

Two Republican senators, Mark Kirk of Illinois and Rob Portman of Ohio, have announced their support for gay marriage.

Nebraska

Debate Begins On Juvenile Sentencing Bill

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska lawmakers are trying to set a new minimum prison sentence for convicted murderers who committed their crimes as juveniles.

Lawmakers failed to reach a vote Monday on a sentencing bill, introduced in response to last year's U.S. Supreme Court ruling, *Miller v. Alabama*. The decision prevented judges nationwide from imposing mandatory life-without-parole sentences for anyone younger than 18.

The state Judiciary Committee advanced bill to the full Legislature in February, but left open the question of the exact minimum sen-

tence that judges should impose.

Sen. Brad Ashford, the committee's chairman, presented an amendment that would set a 30-year minimum sentence, while other lawmakers are pushing for a 60-year minimum sentence.

Current state law requires life-without-parole sentences for anyone convicted of first-degree murder.

The bill would also allow judges to consider other factors in sentencing, including offenders' ages, maturity, their involvement in a crime and participation in rehabilitation programs.

Ashford, from Omaha, has said lawmakers are trying to find a new minimum that balances the need for justice with the recognition

that adolescent brains haven't fully developed.

"What we're trying to do is give to the trial judge and the board of parole the discretion they need," while still allowing judges to impose life sentences for the most heinous crimes, Ashford said. Research has shown that adolescents are more impulsive and less likely to grasp the severity of their actions.

Advocates for the inmates argue that life sentences fail to consider mental health problems or childhoods filled with violence, neglect and parental drug use.

Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh of Omaha is proposing a minimum 60-year sentence, arguing that a 30-year sentence would allow inmates

to qualify for release in as few as 15 years, under current sentencing guidelines. Under his proposal, inmates would become eligible for parole after 30 years.

A 60-year sentence "signals to the citizens across Nebraska that we take it very, very seriously when there's a loss of life," Omaha Sen. Beau McCoy said.

He introduced a bill amendment late Monday that would make the 30-year sentence mandatory, eliminating the possibility of early release. It's also possible that lawmakers may still approve a 60-year minimum, he said.

Lawmakers are expected to resume debate on Tuesday.

Thatcher

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way, and envisioned a classless society that rewarded hard work and determination.

She was a trailblazer who at first believed trailblazing impossible: Thatcher told the *Liverpool Daily Post* in 1974 that she did not think a woman would serve as party leader or prime minister during her lifetime.

But once in power, she never showed an ounce of doubt.

Thatcher could be intimidating to those working for her:

British diplomats sighed with relief on her first official visit to Washington, D.C., as prime minister to find that she was relaxed enough to enjoy a glass of whiskey and a half-glass of wine during an embassy lunch, according to official documents.

Like her close friend and political ally Ronald Reagan, Thatcher seemed motivated by an unshakable belief that free markets would build a better country than reliance on a strong, central government. Another thing she shared with the American president: a tendency to reduce problems to their basics, choose a path, and follow it to the end, no matter what the opposition.

She formed a deep attachment to the man she called "Ronnie" —

some spoke of it as a schoolgirl crush. Still, she would not back down when she disagreed with him on important matters, even though the United States was the richer and vastly stronger partner in the so-called "special relationship."

Thatcher was at her brashest when Britain was challenged. When Argentina's military junta seized the remote Falklands Islands from Britain in 1982, she did not hesitate even though her senior military advisers said it might not be feasible to reclaim the islands.

She simply would not allow Britain to be pushed around, particularly by military dictators, said Ingham, who recalls the Falklands War as the tensest period of Thatcher's three terms in power. When diplomacy failed, she dispatched a military task force that accomplished her goal, despite the naysayers.

"That required enormous leadership," Ingham said. "This was a formidable undertaking, this was a risk with a capital R-I-S-K, and she demonstrated her leadership by saying she would give the military their marching orders and let them get on with it."

In deciding on war, Thatcher overruled Foreign Office specialists who warned her about the dangers of striking back. She was infuriated by warnings about the dangers to British citizens in Argentina and the

difficulty of getting support from the U.N. Security Council.

"When you are at war you cannot allow the difficulties to dominate your thinking: you have to set out with an iron will to overcome them," she said in her memoir, "Downing Street Years." "And anyway what was the alternative? That a common or garden dictator should rule over the queen's subjects and prevail by fraud and violence? Not while I was prime minister."

Thatcher's determination to reclaim the islands brought her into conflict with Reagan, who dispatched Secretary of State Alexander Haig on a shuttle mission to London and Buenos Aires to seek a peaceful solution even as British warships approached the Falklands.

A private diary kept by U.S. diplomat Jim Rentschler captures Thatcher at this crisis point.

"And here's Maggie, appearing in a flower-decorated salon adjoining the small dining room (...) sipping orange juice and sherry," Rentschler wrote. "La Thatcher is really quite fetching in a dark velvet two-piece ensemble with grosgrain piping and a soft hairdo that heightens her blond English coloring."

But the niceties faded over the dinner table.

"High color is in her cheeks, a note of rising indignation in her

voice, she leans across the polished table and flatly rejects what she calls the "woolliness" of our second-stage formulation," Rentschler writes.

Needless to say, Haig's peace mission soon collapsed.

The relatively quick triumph of British forces revived Thatcher's political fortunes, which had been faltering along with the British economy. She won an overwhelming victory in 1983, tripling her majority in the House of Commons.

She trusted her gut instinct, famously concluding early on that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev represented a clear break in the Soviet tradition of autocratic rulers. She pronounced that the West could "do business" with him, a position that influenced Reagan's vital dealings with Gorbachev in the twilight of the Soviet era.

Thatcher wrote several best-selling memoirs after leaving office and was a frequent speaker on the international circuit before she suffered several small strokes that in 2002 led her to curtail her lucrative public speaking career.

She suffered from dementia in her final years, and her public appearances became increasingly rare.

She is survived by her two children, Mark Thatcher and Carol Thatcher, and her grandchildren.

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Michael Peterson, MD,
Radiation Oncologist

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If you have a weather radio in your home you'll have advance warning when severe weather is heading toward you.

The Press & Dakotan and both locations of Kopetsky's Ace Hardware will be giving away a weather radio (\$34.99 value) to two lucky readers.

Just fill out the entry form and drop it at either of the two Kopetsky's Ace Hardware locations: 2404 Broadway or 103 W. 3rd St. by Wednesday, April 17, 2013.

A winner will be drawn from each location and announced on the Severe Weather Awareness page running in the April 22 Press & Dakotan in conjunction with Severe Weather Awareness Week in South Dakota.

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