

Nebraska State Fair Announces \$5.4M Project

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska State Fair has announced plans to erect a \$5.4 million building that will provide exhibition space and administrative offices for the State Fair staff at Fonner Park in Grand Island.

State Fair Executive Director Joseph McDermott told *The Grand Island Independent* that construction on the Nebraska Building will begin within a month and should be completed by the end of the year.

The building will be erected just inside the fair's main entrance, just north of the Exhibition Building. It will have 54,000 square feet of exhibition space on the ground level and 10,800 square feet for offices on the upper level. The building also will house a museum with 144 years of fair information and artifacts.

Exhibitors that will move from the Exhibition Building into the Nebraska Building include the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Grow Nebraska, Nebraska Food Products and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Most of the building's cost will be financed by Nebraska-owned banks, McDermott said.

The Nebraska Building will be owned and maintained by the Nebraska State Fair all year, which differs from the arrangement with the operators of Fonner Park, he said. Fonner Park is the site of horse racing, the Hall County Fair and other events for 10 months of the year. On Aug. 1 the State Fair takes control of the other Fonner Park buildings it uses and returns control to Fonner Park on Sept. 30.

McDermott said the State Fair has been talking to groups that might be interested in leasing exhibition space on the ground floor of the new building for those 10 months of the year when the building won't be used for the State Fair.

Campaign Propels Nebraskan To White House

CRETE, Neb. (AP) — A campaign by some southeast Nebraska teenagers has propelled their teacher into the White House.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reported Friday that Crete high school students sent letters, emails and worked social media so civics teacher Bernie Ludvik could get to meet President Barack Obama. The White House has granted Ludvik a visit later this month.

"If it had not been for almost the entire student body, especially the sophomore class, this would not have happened for me," Ludvik said. "I'm just very, very grateful."

Ludvik has been substitute teaching at Crete middle and high schools since 2005.

He'd planned to attend Obama's inauguration in January, but was severely injured in a traffic accident on Nov. 26. Broken bones and a brain injury kept him hospitalized for months. But as he recovered, students began their campaign.

They used Facebook and Twitter to inform people and created a Facebook page, "Get well soon Bernie Ludvik."

They sent letters and emails to state senators and to Nebraska's congressional delegation, eventually persuading Sen. Mike Johanns to write a letter to the president requesting a meeting.

The students also raised money to help cover his expenses: \$800 through T-shirt sales and \$1,000 more from a dodgeball tournament.

The good news from the White House came Thursday, when a presidential staffer called Ludvik to tell him he could meet the president on April 23.

Ludvik said he's excited.

He'd heard other presidents speak, he said, "but I've never had the chance to shake the hand of a president."

Augustana Mourning The Loss Of Alumna

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Augustana College is mourning the loss of a 77-year-old woman who died in a Friday morning fire.

KDLT television reports that Margaret Solveig Steen was a long-time piano instructor and Augustana alumna.

Firefighters who responded to the blaze about 6:30 a.m. Friday found Steen on the home's main floor. The cause of death was not immediately determined.

Solveig Steen, as she was known on campus, was a pianist for more than 70 years, most recently having a recital on campus in the fall of 2012.

UNMC: No Evidence Of Misconduct In Research

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The University of Nebraska Medical Center has found no evidence of research misconduct after questions were raised about data integrity in an academic article.

The university made the announcement Friday after conducting an internal investigation. The review came after the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care* raised questions about a study it published online in February 2012. The study was done jointly by UNMC and researchers from Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will review UNMC's findings, as required by federal research-misconduct regulations. The university says it can provide another update once that review is complete.

The study in question examined the role of some proteins involved in a lung complication that is associated with the AIDS virus.

Another Storm Takes Aim At The Dakotas

BY KRISTI EATON
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — As South Dakota residents start to clean up after a major spring storm brought freezing rain and heavy snow that snapped tree branches, residents of North Dakota are bracing for another wallop.

North Dakota could see freezing rain and as much as a foot of snow this weekend, the National Weather Service said. Strong winds could accompany the storm, creating near-blizzard conditions and making travel hazardous.

Several inches of snow fell Thursday in southeastern North Dakota, the northern edge of a system that slammed South Dakota for three straight days and dumped as much as 30 inches of snow in the west and freezing rain in the east.

About 16,000 people remained without electricity in eastern South Dakota late Friday morning. More than 400 crew members from North Dakota, Kansas and elsewhere are working to restore power, said Jim Wilcox

with Xcel Energy.

Wilcox said Xcel has been prioritizing by focusing on the greatest number of outages in one job and then focusing on single customers.

"It's kind of like a tree," he said. "We start at the trunk of the tree and work up to the branches and out to the twigs and then finally to the leaves, like the individual homes."

A Red Cross shelter for those without power will remain open, said Regan Smith, Sioux Falls Emergency Management director. Twelve people used the shelter Thursday night.

Ice-heavy branches and trees remain as obstacles around the city, and Fire Chief Jim Sideras cautioned residents not to use equipment to clear them without training.

"This is not the time to learn how to use a chain saw," he said.

Still, chain saws and generators have been hot commodities in Sioux Falls. The Lowe's store ran out of both this week, and expected to get about 100 more chain saws Friday, said

Jared Lahr, a department manager.

Sideras also urged people to be patient with the cleanup efforts.

"We're not going to be done with this tomorrow or next week, although we would like to. We're going to go into the long haul with this," he said.

He and the Better Business Bureau are warning residents and businesses about scam artists. Sideras said also there have been some reports of people asking for donations for police and fire departments.

"While some of these contractors may offer a low price and fast repairs, they may not stand behind their work," Better Business Bureau President and CEO Jim Hegarty said in a statement. "If the contractor is from out of state, who will service the warranty if problems arise later? Consumers should ask questions."

South Dakota residents might also have to deal with more bad weather. The rain and snow forecast for North Dakota this weekend could extend into parts of South Dakota, the weather service said.

N. Dakota Abortion Measure Sent To Governor

BY JAMES MACPHERSON
Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — A measure that would outlaw abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy based on the disputed premise that a fetus can by then feel pain was sent to the North Dakota governor Friday.

The North Dakota Legislature is taking a multi-pronged approach this session in trying to make North Dakota the most restrictive state in the nation in which to get the procedure, with Gov. Jack Dalrymple already signing three measures into law. Lawmakers' intent is to challenge the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* ruling that legalized abortion up until viability, usually at 22 to 24 weeks.

The so-called "fetal pain" bill passed the House on Friday with a 60-32 vote. The bill, which was approved by the Senate 30-17 in February, now goes to the Republican governor, who has hinted he will sign it.

Republican state Sen. Joe Miller, the bill's primary sponsor, said the measure was "a different precedent and a different strategy" than other anti-abortion measures introduced this session.

"The fetal heartbeat bill is what it is and this is what it is," said Miller, a farmer from Park River in eastern North Dakota. "We all came forward with different ideas."

Rep. Gail Mooney, D-Cummings, opposed the measure and

said the state has already made its point that it's anti-abortion with the other measures passed this session, including one that bans abortions when a heartbeat can be detected, as early as six weeks into a pregnancy and before some women even know they're pregnant.

"The question needs to be asked: How many more do we need?" she said.

In addition to Dalrymple signing the fetal heartbeat measure, he also put his pen to a measure that bans abortions because a fetus has genetic defects such as Down syndrome and one requiring a doctor who performs abortions to be a physician with hospital-admitting privileges. All of the measures would take effect Aug. 1, and are fueled in part by an attempt to close the state's sole abortion clinic in Fargo.

State lawmakers also moved last month to outlaw abortion in the state by passing a resolution defining life as starting at conception, essentially banning abortion in the state. The measure is likely to come before voters in November 2014.

Abortion rights advocates say the laws are unconstitutional and have promised a legal fight that they say will be long, costly and unwinnable for the state.

Rep. Peter Silbernagel, R-Casselton, said Friday the "fetal pain" bill was worthwhile because it "recognizes unborn children do feel pain."

But Rep. Kylie Oversen, D-Grand Forks, said that is disputed by the scientific community and called it a pointless piece of legislation.

"A doctor cannot definitively determine post-fertilization age," she said. "So we're basing this on a guess."

House Republican majority leader Al Carlson of Fargo said lawmakers introduced the legislation at the urging of their constituents.

"This is important to a lot of people and it irritates a lot of people," Carlson said.

Democratic Sen. Mac Schneider, the Senate's minority leader and a Grand Forks attorney, said the spate of abortion bills this session has meant other important issues have taken a back seat.

"I believe it has taken a lot of the oxygen out of the room when it comes to other challenges we are facing this session," Schneider said. "This is another bill that will be litigated — that much we know."

Lawmakers have started building a war chest to defend against potential lawsuits. The Senate has unanimously supported a request by state Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem for a \$400,000 budget increase.

At least 10 states have passed bills banning abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy on the premise that a fetus can feel pain at that stage, but research is split on the theory.

Commander: Cuts Make Fleet Less Ready To Respond

RAPID CITY — The newly appointed leader of Ellsworth Air Force Base said Friday that federal cutbacks mean the base's bomber fleet will be less ready to respond to "crises around the globe" for the next six months.

Col. Kevin Kennedy, who took the reins as commander of the 28th Bomb Wing last week, said the base's local B-1 bombers will be grounded until Oct. 1 as part of larger Air Force efforts to save nearly \$300 million.

Bombers in combat will continue to fly and the base will also continue piloting remote aircraft, commonly known as drones, in the skies of Afghanistan. Kennedy said the bombers are now in a state of "tiered readiness".

The military is halting training operations for 12 active-duty fighter and bomber squadrons across the country. The Air Force is cutting 45,000 training hours from its operations between now and the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. The move prompted by federal budget cuts does not affect active military operations.

Ellsworth officials said in a statement that the training cutback will affect the 28th Bomb Wing's "combat readiness, aviator qualifications and currency on the B-1."

Sibling Silly Class

Saturday, April 20, 3 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Birthing Center

Children will learn what new babies do, how to help mom and dad, their role as a big brother or sister and will become familiar with the Women/Birthing Center. Children will also learn how to safely hold babies and adjust to being a sibling.

Class is free. Children ages 3-8. Call (605) 668-8080 to register.

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