



Plenty Of Sunshine

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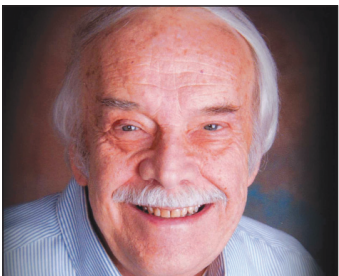
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**Named To
YHS Fine
Arts Hall
Of Fame**
RIVER CITY



TACKLING THE TRANSIT ISSUE



Velda Bentson is the director of Yankton Transit and the Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit. She oversees transportation services for the non-profit agencies in almost 20 area communities and counties.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Transit Director Kept Busy By Recent Events

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of the Press & Dakotan's monthly series spotlighting occupations, tasks and duties in our coverage area.

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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As a transit director for Yankton and other communities in the region, Velda Bentson is used to being on the move. On any given day, she is managing more than 60 employees, wrestling with mechanical issues on a vehicle or hopping behind the steering wheel to transport a client. However, the month of April presented some special challenges for the director of Yankton Transit and the Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit, which serves a combination of 18 towns and counties. ROCS is based in Lake Andes. Instead of spending her usual two days a week in Yankton, the largest community for which she oversees transit services, Bentson has been in the community daily. "With the things that have been going on lately, I've hardly had time to go do other duties," she said. "It's been a challenge." A recent Federal Transit Administration (FTA) ruling found that Yankton Transit, a non-profit organization that receives federal funding, was improperly providing exclusive school bus service to young student riders. In April, Yankton Transit implemented a



ON THE JOB

scheduling software led to serious delays in picking up and delivering students. The situation left many parents angry and frustrated. After further communication with the FTA, Yankton Transit was told that it could continue providing service as it had in the past until the end of the current school year. "I've tried to be patient," Bentson said. "We've been getting a lot of calls, and sometimes the calls aren't nice. I just tell myself, this is a time we're going through and it's going to get better. You have to stay positive." She shares many of the concerns of her parent callers. One reason Yankton Transit had buses that only carried children was to ensure their safety. Bentson said she also believed it was reassuring to the youngsters to see the same driver every day. "When we go to enroll children for the fall school year, we can be up front with the school parents and tell them the risk they

TRANSIT | PAGE 14A

No Vote Yet On Internet Sales Tax

BY STEPHEN OHLEMACHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A handful of senators from states without sales taxes are blocking a bill that would tax Internet purchases. They don't have enough support to kill the bill, but they can delay a final vote until Friday — or even this weekend — if senators don't reach an agreement to vote earlier. The bill would empower states to require online retailers to collect state and local sales taxes for purchases made over the Internet. Under the bill, the sales taxes would be sent to the states where a shopper lives. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., is leading the fight against the bill. Oregon, Montana, New Hampshire and Delaware have no

sales taxes, though the two senators from Delaware support the bill. "It's coercive. It requires a number of states to collect the taxes of other states thousands of miles away against their will," Wyden said in an interview. "It's discrimination because this forces some people online to carry out responsibilities that brick and mortar retailers do not have to do." Wyden said the bill also gives an advantage to foreign retailers. Supporters say the bill treats foreign retailers the same as domestic ones, but opponents question the ability of states to enforce state tax laws on companies based in other countries. The bill has already survived two procedural votes this week, getting 74 votes in favor

each time. If senators don't reach an agreement to vote earlier, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., threatened to hold a vote shortly after midnight Friday morning to end the debate. The Senate is scheduled to go on vacation next week, and Reid vowed to pass the bill before senators leave town. "One way or another, we will finish work on this measure before we leave," Reid said. Wyden said he doesn't want to inconvenience senators eager to go home. But, he added, "I don't want to have our constituents rolled over in the process." Under current law, states can only require stores to collect sales taxes if the store has

TAX | PAGE 3A

Moisture Leaves A Positive Mark On Region

Climatologist: Weather Was Well-Timed

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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April showers may bring May flowers, but this month's surge in moisture has also brought plenty of smiles to farmers and other residents throughout the region. "I think we are still lagging behind (for precipitation), but it's certainly a lot better than it was two or three weeks ago," said Dave Bartel, manager of the James River Water Development District (JRWD). "I feel a lot of the rural people are talking a lot more positive today than a couple of weeks ago," he added. This weekend's expected warm-up will also provide a much needed break from an early spring that has been dominated by cold and snow-fall. How cold and snowy? This spring is one for the record books, according to South Dakota state climatologist Dennis Today. "Yankton is the coldest on record for the spring — since March 1 — so far at 31.7 degrees," he said. "Yankton has seen 5.75 total inches of precipitation, the 14th wettest, and 12.4 inches of snow, for the 15th snowiest." Even more important than the amount of moisture are its content and timing, Today said. "Most of this precipitation will help. The earlier precipitation fell on frozen ground and only helped ponds. More recent precipitation and snow is entering soil moisture," he said. "The concern is that we still have some deep soil moisture profile deficits that are still with us."

MOISTURE | PAGE 3A

Drought Eases In Many Places, Fields Turn To Mud

BY DAVID PITT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — As spring rains soaked the central United States and helped conquer the historic drought, a new problem has sprouted: The fields have turned to mud. The weekly drought monitor report, released Thursday by National Drought Mitigation Center in Lincoln, Neb., showed the heavy rains that also caused some flooding in the last week brought drought relief to the upper Midwest, western Corn Belt and central portions of the Plains. Farmers may be thankful the land is no longer parched, but it's too wet to plant in corn country and freezing temperatures and lingering snow have ruined the winter wheat crop. "Right now, we're wishing it would dry up so we can get

MUD | PAGE 14A

HEAT WAVE



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

The heat was on outside of Yankton High School Thursday as the students in Vicki Barron's Pottery and Sculpture class got a firsthand look at the making of Raku pottery. Tom Clarke (pictured) and his wife Wanda of Dakota Pottery Supply in Sioux Falls brought two kilns down to help the students with their clay creations, which were exposed to almost 1,850-degree heat and then exposed to air to create unusual colors and designs.

ADDENDUM

In today's River City, the four photos used for the Yankton High School Fine Arts Hall of Fame story were supplied to the Press & Dakotan by Photography by Jerry. This information was inadvertently omitted from the River City section.

SPORTS



**Yankton Hosts Large
Field For Relays • 8A**

RIVER CITY



**A Summer Of Sequels
Is Ready To Roll • 6B**

INSIDE TODAY



USA Weekend

CORRECTION

Thursday's story on the MSAC presentation should have said ground water is expected to increase an average of seven feet in the Lewis and Clark Lake delta area in the next 50 years, impacting infrastructure and property. The seven feet is a total, not annual, increase.



REGION 2A-3A | OBITUARIES 3A | VIEWS 4A | WORLD 5A | SPORTS 8A-9A | CLASSIFIEDS 10A-13A | MIDWEST 13A

TOMORROW: Local Agencies Participate In Hostage Exercise

YANKTON RECYCLING THIS WEEK:
SOUTH
OF 15TH STREET