

Harney Peak Renaming Input Heightened

PIERRE (AP) — A state board is expecting more public input than usual on the proposed name change to Harney Peak in Pennington County.

The South Dakota Board on Geographic Names planned for five public meetings across the state at its Tuesday meeting. The board also accepts written comments.

One new suggested name for the geographic feature is Black Elk Peak, but many others have already been proposed. The peak is located in the Black Hills National Forest, and it's been described as the highest summit in the U.S. east of the Rocky Mountains.

It was named for Army Gen. William S. Harney, who in 1855 led soldiers that killed 86 Sioux in Nebraska. The board will take public input and could issue a recommendation to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

Neb. Lawmakers Spar Over Local Control

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers will continue to clash on whether the state or counties should set policies to help develop agriculture.

The Legislature sparred Tuesday over a measure that would create statewide standards for livestock producers trying to obtain permits.

Advocates say the bill encourages growth in the Nebraska's top industry by simplifying the permit process for new or expanding operations. But opponents say a "state-down" approach discredits county boards' knowledge of local community needs.

The original bill by Syracuse Sen. Dan Watermeier sparked a backlash from county zoning administrators because it would mandate county standards and create a board that could overturn county decisions.

Watermeier says he's open to changes that would make the standards optional. Lawmakers will resume debate Wednesday.

Judge Finds Rights Of Indians Violated

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A federal judge in South Dakota has ruled that state judges and officials in Pennington County have routinely violated provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act and due process rights of American Indian parents during preliminary child custody hearings since 2010.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Viken issued the opinion on a lawsuit filed by the Oglala Sioux and Rosebud Sioux tribes and three Indian parents.

Viken wrote that state Judge Jeff Davis and other defendants have failed to protect Indian parents' fundamental rights at preliminary 48-hour custody hearings. Some of the violations Viken cites include not allowing parents to testify and not allowing them court-appointed counsel.

Viken says hearings typically last less than five minutes and removed children spend weeks or months away from their parents.

SD Wildfire Grows To 16 Square Miles

RAPID CITY (AP) — A wildfire burning in northwestern South Dakota's Harding County has grown to about 16 square miles.

The Great Plains Fire Information office estimates that the Sheep Draw Fire has burned more than 10,000 acres since Saturday afternoon. The cause is still being investigated.

Fire officials have said it could take several days to fully contain the blaze. More than 100 firefighters with federal, state and volunteer agencies have been attacking the fire, along with area ranchers and two South Dakota National Guard helicopters.

No one has been hurt. Some homes, other buildings and natural gas wells have been threatened, but firefighters have been able to protect the structures.

Woman Accused Of Rape Unfit For Trial

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A 30-year-old Sioux Falls woman found naked in her apartment with at least three boys has been found unfit to stand trial at this time.

Judge Lawrence Long ruled Monday that Anne Doubler will be committed to a mental health treatment facility for up to four months before it's decided whether she'll eventually be competent enough to stand trial.

Doubler is charged with five counts each of first-degree rape, sexual contact with a child under 16 and sexual exploitation.

The *Argus Leader* reports Doubler's husband told police that he returned home last June to find her naked with three boys between the ages of 7 and 10.

Police say the boys, who lived in surrounding apartments, confirmed that they had sexual contact with Doubler.

Panel Moves Bill To Legalize Ridesharing

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A bill that would allow Uber, Lyft and other ridesharing services to operate legally in Nebraska is headed to a vote in the Legislature.

The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee voted 5-2 on Tuesday to advance regulations for the smartphone-based services, which have operated in Nebraska despite legal uncertainties.

The proposal creates insurance coverage regulations for drivers who have logged on to a ridesharing application but haven't picked up a passenger. It's likely to face resistance from banks and insurance companies, who want a more protections.

Sen. Jim Smith of Papillion, the committee chairman, says he voted against the bill to send a message to Uber that he's disappointed in how the company has behaved.

USDA: Record Soybean Acres Expected, Corn Acres To Drop

BY DAVID PITT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Farmers are expected to plant a record number of soybean acres this year, but fewer acres of corn as profit potential for the grain remains low due to slumping prices, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said Tuesday in its first report of the new crop season.

The USDA surveyed 84,000 farmers in March to assess their planting intentions for corn, soybeans and other major crops.

Farmers indicated plans to plant a record high 84.6 million acres in soybeans, up 1 percent from last year. But corn acres will fall for the third consecutive year to 89.2 million acres, down 2 percent from last year and the fewest since 2010.

More farmers are favoring soybeans because they cost less to grow and prices farmers receive for soybeans haven't fallen as quickly as corn. Soybeans also can withstand broader

weather variations. For example, in Iowa, the nation's leading corn state, the grain costs about \$4.23 a bushel to grow when land, machinery and labor costs are factored in, but gets less than \$4 a bushel when sold.

Corn can still be profitable for farmers who own their own land and don't have high overhead costs — particularly in the main corn belt states of Iowa and Illinois where per-acre yields can be high. Many farmers outside of those states, however, are betting they can make more money on soybeans.

North Dakota farmers will cut corn to 2.7 million acres, a significant reduction from the peak of 3.9 million acres in 2013 when corn prices were higher. Soybeans acres in North Dakota will grow to 5.8 million acres from 4.7 million in 2013.

"People that are starting to grow beans have found that in a good year they can produce above average beans and that's worth planting to get the chance to get an excellent yield," according to Craig Olson, who farms 3,000 acres with family members in southeast

North Dakota. "The upside potential is way higher and the risk is lower for soybeans."

Indiana farmers think so, too.

Michael Langemeier, associate director of the Center for Commercial Agriculture at Purdue University, said farmers planted 1 million more acres of corn than soybeans in 2012, but the difference narrowed to about 400,000 acres last year. The USDA report shows an extra 100,000 acres of soybeans will replace corn this planting season.

Elsewhere, Iowa corn acreage will fall by 100,000 acres to 13.6 million while soybean acres jump 200,000 acres to 10.1 million. Illinois also expects corn acres to fall while soybeans gain.

Nebraska looks to buck the trend seen in other states, as its corn acres will remain at 9.3 million, but soybeans will fall by 300,000 acres.

Low corn and soybean prices combined with continued high costs for land, equipment, fertilizer and other chemicals will challenge farm income for the third consecutive year.

Former Corn Palace Director Indicted On Misdemeanor Charge

MITCHELL (AP) — A grand jury has indicted the former director of the Corn Palace tourist attraction in Mitchell on a petty theft charge, and a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

Mark Schilling, 49, resigned about a year ago at Mayor Ken Tracy's request, after a state audit concluded he mishandled money. He told The Associated Press after his resignation that he didn't think he had done anything wrong but had stepped down after 13 years as director because a change was in the city's best interests. He did not immediately respond to an AP request Tuesday for comment on the indictment.

The misdemeanor charge against Schilling

alleges he took gift cards belonging to the city. He could face up to a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine if convicted, *The Daily Republic* newspaper reported.

Tracy said it was an "unfortunate" situation. "I know that there was a very thorough investigation done by the investigators with the state, and I'll trust that they did a proper job in this instance," he said.

About 200,000 tourists each year visit the Corn Palace, which bills itself as the world's only palace dedicated to the grain. Officials are wrapping up a \$7.2 million renovation of the facility.

Late last year, Tracy chose Lakeview Golf Course clubhouse manager Dan Sabers to be the new Corn Palace manager.

Man Charged In Stabbing Of Bureau Of Indian Affairs Superintendent of Crow Creek

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Federal authorities have charged a man in the stabbing of the Bureau of Indian Affairs superintendent on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

Authorities allege that Brian Iron Boulder, 51, stabbed Patrick F. Duffy in the back with a knife on March 25, penetrating Duffy's chest wall. Duffy was in critical condition for a time but is recovering.

Court documents don't indicate a motive for the alleged stabbing. BIA Special Agent Tino Lopez said in an affidavit that a witness told him Iron Boulder often talked with Duffy at his office, and that the stabbing occurred after one of the conversations. Lopez said Iron Boulder admitted to him that he

stabbed Duffy.

Duffy's public defender, Douglas A. Abraham, declined comment to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Documents show that Iron Boulder on Friday waived his right to a detention hearing. He will remain in custody until a preliminary hearing that was not immediately scheduled. U.S. District Judge Roberto Lange on Monday did set a June 2 date for a jury trial on an assault charge that carries a maximum punishment of 20 years in prison.

Iron Boulder is a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe but has been living on the Crow Creek Reservation, where Duffy oversees BIA facilities in Fort Thompson and manages tribal land, according to the *Capital Journal*.

Spearfish Man Gives Away Thousands Of Wooden Cars For Kids

BY KAJIA SWISHER
Black Hills Pioneer

SPEARFISH (AP) — He estimates he's given away close to 5,000 handmade wooden cars.

"I saw some pictures in a magazine one time with some toys," Ron Ackerson, of Spearfish, said of that aspect of his woodworking hobby that he began in his retirement.

Raised in Ellendale, North Dakota, Ackerson lived in Williston and worked in the oil business before retiring about 10 years ago, when he and his wife, Helen, moved to Spearfish. He started Ron's Antler Art, making custom creations ranging from lamps to chandeliers and beyond as he developed the craft.

After seeing the magazine photos, he decided to try his hand at toys, as well. As a Shriner, Ackerson is familiar with the Shriners Hospital for Children in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, and when he learned that the hospital pre-

ferred toys without finish, nails or metallic pieces, he began making and donating 150 wooden cars each month to the hospital. He delivers the cars to Rapid City, and they are then transported to Minneapolis. He later got a call from the Shriners hospital in Houston which had heard about his wooden toys. They asked how much he charged, and he explained that they were donations, asking how many the hospital might be interested in.

"They said, 'Well, we'd like to have 1,000.'" Ackerson told the *Black Hills Pioneer*. "I said OK — but you'll have to arrange for shipping." And sure enough, representatives drove up to Spearfish to pick up the wooden cars in a brand-new pickup, after an auto dealer who heard about the donation provided the hospital the use of the truck for free.

Ackerson said there's a lot of satisfaction in knowing that children can enjoy the toys he makes, and he knows the hos-

pitals have a great need for toys of this kind.

In addition to the Shriners, Ackerson has donated toys to various organizations on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and to the St. Labre Indian School in Ashland, Montana, and he also donates cars to local businesses, including Perkins Restaurant and Mark's Old School Barber & Style Shop. Ackerson knew that Perkins supports Give Kids the World, a nonprofit organization that provides weeklong fantasy vacations to children with life-threatening diseases and their families in central Florida, and anyone who makes a donation to the organization at Perkins receives a wooden car. As a result of this partnership, Ackerson started making bigger models of the wooden toys, adding tractors, semi-trailer trucks, dump trucks, trains and more, to give to donors supporting the organization.

Marc Casavan, owner of Mark's Barber Shop, said

that he had known Ackerson for years, and last year Ackerson asked if the barber shop would be interested in having wooden cars on hand to give out to children. Casavan said they would, and now the barbers hand out the cars to children who come in for haircuts or to those there with their families. Many have never seen handmade toys before, and Casavan said they are excited at the prospect of getting to customize the cars with paint.

"It's pretty unbelievable for him to donate that around to everybody," Casavan said. "He's taking time to do that — that's something special."

Amos Armijo, barber at Mark's Barber Shop, agreed. "The barber shop really appreciates what he does. The kids are excited when they pick up the cars," he said. "He's just been a miracle to us."

Farm

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Cindy led a tour of her greenhouse and high tunnel. The facilities allow her to grow a wider variety of plants for market and raise them for much longer seasons than normally possible in South Dakota.

The Beadle students studied small plants in the greenhouse. They looked in fascination at seeds that were sprouting.

Besides the typical garden fare, Cindy said she enjoys raising a variety of small fruits, particularly berries. She raises organic crops and needed to pull her raspberries when fruit flies became a problem.

Cindy received her horticulture degree from South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings, and she is working with SDSU officials on a project.

"I like to research and experiment, try new things out," she said. "SDSU received a grant with fruit flies, and I trap flies for them."

At a nearby barn, the Beadle students checked out sheep, chicks and a rabbit. The animals are used mainly for 4-H projects, and the youngsters enjoyed the up-close experience.

The other parts of the

tour featured a close-up look at machinery and explanations of planting, harvesting and the crops themselves.

Pravecek, representing the Fred Haar Implement dealership in Yankton, joined Chris Nelsen in explaining the machinery's features. They stressed the efficiency of the large machinery in turning up soil, planting seeds and harvesting crops.

Chris contrasted the youngsters' hands-on experience in the greenhouse with the massive crop numbers for farmers hitting the fields.

"You just finished planting three seeds at a time," he told the students. "When we talk about farmers, we talk about them planting thousands of seeds at a time."

Pravecek displayed corn and soybeans, while he and Chris Nelsen talked about the germination process.

As the demonstration wrapped up, Chris said the youngsters seemed to absorb the information.

"They already grasp the concept of gardening, which is on a smaller scale," he said. "Now, with the larger equipment, you have a super-sized scale. The kids got to see the equipment, what we do, what we grow and how we do it."

Beadle School officials approached the Nelsens about offering a farm tour. "We talked about doing this in the spring because you

had the lambs and chicks, and because it's a season of renewal," Chris said.

The Nelsens offered the farm tours with the assistance and sponsorship of First Dakota National Bank, First National Bank of South Dakota, Fred Haar Implement, Mark's Machinery, Koleszky Implement, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Yankton County 4-H office.

Pravecek said the lessons reached the right age group.

"We leave such an impression on them for the rest of their lives, good or bad, so we need to focus on the good (about agriculture)," he said.

Matt Tereshinski, with First Dakota National Bank, agreed on the importance of the farm tour.

"The Yankton School District allows one field trip a year. It was nice of Chris and Cindy to put this together. They made a few phone calls and got some sponsors to make it happen," he said.

"With today's ag, there are fewer and fewer kids who have the experience to come to the farm and be around it. And technology has changed so much over the years. It's grown by leaps and bounds, and it keeps evolving."

The Nelsens' tours took the message to the next level by allowing youngsters to visit a farm and experience it

themselves, Tereshinski said. "It's really been a learning experience for this (Beadle) group," he said.

The effort to spread the ag message will take on even more importance in the years ahead, Tereshinski said.

"Because of consolidation of farms in the ag industry, there are fewer farms per square mile," he said. "It impacts the number of kids who aren't going to see agriculture or experience it."

Beadle teacher Lynn Becker said the afternoon was truly a teachable moment for the adults as well as the children.

"I'm glad they held this. Some of us never get very close to machinery like this. They are seeing a combine for the first time," she said.

A random sample of students expressed great joy at the entire experience.

"I liked seeing the sheep," one girl said. "They said, 'BAAAA' when we left them, but it was like they were saying 'BYYYYY' to us."

One boy said the day clinched his career plans. "I want to grow up to be a farmer!" he proclaimed.

Such sentiments struck a chord with Chris Nelsen, who said he ran the tractor and enjoyed other experiences while growing up on the farm. He later studied agronomy at SDSU, fueling his fascination with crops

and other plants.

"I love the land and want to watch things grow," he said.

Chris returned to the family farm and continued the operation for another generation. However, he has found himself among a shrinking number which could become even smaller in the coming years.

"We have seen such an exodus (from agriculture) since the 1970s," he said. "People aren't making money on the farm, so they're going into town to get jobs, and there are fewer and fewer people left on the farm."

In turn, many people receive and believe a great misinformation about agriculture, he said.

"My family has farmed in the area for 150 years," he said. "We're not going to poison the soil. We're going to preserve the resource. Our (farming) story isn't told, or

it's slanted so it's not the whole truth."

Yankton County 4-H/youth development director Stephanie Siebrandt echoed the same message. She expressed appreciation to the Nelsens, who are a 4-H family, for offering the tours.

"This (farm tour) is a great thing because it's something that many of these kids will never see," she said. "Not that many youngsters have grandparents, aunts or uncles they can visit on the farm. Here, they got to see how the farm works. They got to see the machinery, crops and livestock firsthand."

Chris Nelsen added. "Today, we just let the kids play with the soil and get their hands dirty," he said.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

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