

Benefit

From Page 1

"There is a guy that will be donating his Harley motorcycle," Noecker said. "Whatever we make over the \$3,000 goes to Ethan. The bike lists at \$4,800."

Other items on the auction include a weeks vacation stay at a five star resort of the winning bidder's choice from 10 different destinations for a family, a sprinkler system, a fireworks display package, a Christmas at the Cathedral package, a Lewis and Clark Camping package, a Ultimate Tailgating Husker Party package along with 300 other items.

Team Ethan T-shirts will also be available at the event.

For the first year of Ethan's life, he was like every other baby. It wasn't until last fall that Lenhoff and his wife Amanda noticed some troubling changes.

"My wife was feeding Ethan and she went outside for a minute, but I was in there with him," he said. "When she came back, it looked like he was choking on some kind of food. His lips were blue."

Lenhoff said he took Ethan out of the high chair and did the reverse Heimlich.

"A little piece of food came out," Lenhoff said. "It seemed like he was OK after that. We really watched him after because we were really concerned."

"But after the incident, Ethan was normal," Lenhoff said. "He was laughing and running around. I just thought, 'Kids choke on stuff. It's normal.' So we didn't do much."

But as a precaution, Amanda set up an appointment for Ethan for that next week.

Just hours before the appointment, she noticed Ethan's lips were blue again.

"This time he wasn't eating at all," Lenhoff said. "We knew something was up."

At the appointment, Ethan's primary care physician recommended that the couple admit Ethan at the Sanford Children's Hospital.

"They scheduled every test you could think of," he said. "They were supposed to do a spinal tap after the MRI, but when they told us that the spinal tap was canceled, we knew something was up."

The Lenhoff family were given the news that there baby had a brain cancer known as grade II pilomyxoid astrocytoma.

"We called our parents right away," Lenhoff said. "That was the hardest thing." Ethan was then flown to the University of Minnesota Children's Hospital in Minneapolis to meet with a pediatric neurosurgeon who removed Ethan's tumor just days after finding out.

"Everything has happened so fast and we are so overwhelmed and scared, but we are hanging in there and trusting the doctors to do what's best for Ethan," Amanda posted on Ethan's Caring Bridge website.

Since the diagnosis, Ethan has had three major brain surgeries on his brain along with two minor procedures to drain fluid around the one-year olds brain.

"No human being, let alone child, should ever have to go through this," Lenhoff said on Ethan's Go Fund Me page. "Ethan has shown us he can handle what has been thrown at him and even surprised us by his resiliency."

Ethan started his first round of chemotherapy in February.

"He has his good days and his bad days with it," Lenhoff said. "The chemo that he is on really affects his immune system. They have had to skip one dose because his platelets were low. For a normal person, your counts are usually 1800; he was at 300."

On April 21, the family finally got some good news: The tumor was stable.

"We are so happy and praising God," Amanda wrote on Ethan's Caring Bridge page. "Even though Ethan hasn't even had the full dose of chemo due to his low counts, it's apparently working."

Lenhoff said that any little bit that people can contribute helps.

"What's down the road is really concerning," he said. "There is some stuff that's not covered by insurance. But with meals, hotels, travel, medical bills — it all adds up."

But above all, the Lenhoff family ask for prayers.

"Obviously it's working," Noecker said. "He is doing very good for all he's been through. I really believe that is what is going to get him through all this."

For more information on Ethan or to donate to the Lenhoff family go to the Ethan Lenhoff Caring Bridge page, or go to www.gofundme.com/ethanlenhoff.

Follow @hartjordynne on Twitter.

Victim Testifies In 1st Jamaican Lottery Scam Case

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — An elderly widow from North Dakota who authorities say was among dozens of victims of a Jamaican lottery scam told jurors in federal court she lost about \$300,000 and borrowed against her insurance policy with the hopes of collecting \$19 million to help her family.

Edna Schmeets, 86, testified Monday in the trial of Sanjay Williams, one of 32 defendants charged in a global case that authorities say involves at least 72 victims, most of them elderly. Several people have pleaded guilty and 14 defendants are awaiting extradition from Jamaica. Williams, who has pleaded not guilty to conspiracy,

wire fraud and money laundering, is the first person to go to trial.

Williams, who is from Jamaica but was arrested when he flew into Charlotte, North Carolina, came into court wearing orange prison clothes and carrying two garbage bags that appeared to contain documents and books. After trial recessed for the day, he asked U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland if he could have a laptop at his desk Tuesday to review DVDs. Hovland agreed.

Schmeets, of Harvey, calmly recounted a series of phone calls from scammers who wanted "another check and another check and another check" from her in order to cover

taxes and fees for the purported prize. She said she eventually became suspicious of the lottery, but by that time had emptied her savings account.

"I was feeling pretty bad because they said, 'Absolutely don't tell anybody about this,' until I got the \$19 million," she said.

One of the banks in Harvey contacted Schmeets' children about big checks she was writing to Shannon O'Connor in Florida, and eventually the case reached the FBI after the family filed a complaint. FBI Agent Frank Gasper testified Monday he travelled to Florida to interview and arrest O'Connor, and that opened the door to the wide-ranging case.

Prosecutor Nick Chase said in his opening statement that Williams sold lists of potential victims to scammers, known as "lead lists" or "sucker lists." Some of them were on Williams' website gamblersleads.com, Chase said.

Schmeets, whose husband died in 2010, said she was first contacted in the fall of 2011 by someone who identified himself as Newton Bennett. Authorities say she was the first victim in the scam.

"Edna Schmeets was very excited. She thought it was a great opportunity to help her children and grandchildren," Chase said. "But there was no prize."

Drought

From Page 1

significant deficits at the 30-, 60- and 90-day time periods, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The short-term conditions don't look promising when it comes to precipitation, Today said.

"The drought conditions will likely worsen over the plains before (they begin) evening out or improving," he said. "Then, it will begin improving in the central plains."

The chance of an El Nino weather pattern affecting the plains is approximately 60 to 70 percent through 2015, Today said. Any impact likely wouldn't be felt until this summer, he added.

The Yankton region already shows a significant moisture shortage, Today said.

"Through today, you (in Yankton) have received 2.59 inches (for the year), and the average is 5.45 inches since January 1," he said. "That puts you at the 13th driest start to a year."

In addition, the U.S. Drought Monitor's precipitation ranking map shows the first three months of this year was the driest January-March period since record-keeping started for South Dakota.

All of South Dakota, except for the extreme southwest corner of the state, is classified as abnormally dry or in drought.

Abnormally dry conditions were posted in Yankton, Clay, Union and southern Turner and Lincoln counties. Moderate drought conditions were posted for Charles Mix, Douglas, Hutchinson and Bon Homme counties and northern Turner and

Lincoln counties.

In northeast Nebraska, the entire region is classified as abnormally dry. The exception lies in extreme northwest Knox County, which is listed as moderate drought.

How much — and what type of precipitation — would it take to overcome the moisture deficit?

"About 3 inches brings you back to around average, but what does that mean?" Today asked. "A 3-inch rainfall would likely run off and not be as effective helping refill soil moisture. That's one of our biggest issues down there (in the Yankton region) — soil moisture deficits carried over from last fall."

"The other thing to remember is that average (precipitation) right now is about 0.75 inches per week," he said, reflecting it would take a month of normal moisture to accumulate 3 inches.

ON FIRE!

Even with recent moisture, a number of counties enacted and continue to enforce burn bans. Red flag warnings, posted during high to extreme fire danger, have become regular fixtures throughout the region because of high temperatures, dry conditions and high winds.

Today said he has heard of two burn bans being removed from East River, with at least one added in West River.

"Green-up is helping that issue and reducing the fire danger some," he said. "But until we get wetter, people should still be careful with fire and when planting to make sure no stray sparks or heat from tractors start up dry residue. Statewide, if conditions on rangeland don't improve, we could have ongoing issues."

Fires are not uncommon in spring, Today said. However, this year's condi-

tions are intensified because of dry surfaces, good growth for many years, lack of snow to knock down vegetation, numerous red flag warnings and rapidly spreading/burning areas.

When South Dakota's conditions hit D2 (severe drought), the state drought task force is required to meet, Today said. The task force would implement a state drought plan.

According to the task force website, the drought currently affects 594,000 South Dakotans, or about 75 percent of the state's population.

According to the High Plains Regional Climate Center, the Yankton region saw last month's precipitation range from 0.9-1.2 inches in portions of Yankton, Turner, Clay, Douglas, Charles Mix and Douglas counties in southeast South Dakota and Knox and Cedar counties in northeast Nebraska.

On the other end of the spectrum, a total of 1.8-2.1 inches of rain fell in northwest Bon Homme County and southwest Hutchinson County.

The rest of the region fell in the middle of those two ranges.

The whole state of South Dakota has seen less than 75 to 80 percent of normal precipitation.

OTHER IMPACTS

The drought conditions have raised questions about spring field work, Today said. The region is nearing a critical point in the season, he added.

"As for planting, it's initially not horrible because soil temperatures are good and people can get in to the fields," he said. "But we're reaching a point where we need some moisture to make sure seeds start to grow, and then longer-term moisture (is needed) to overcome the soil moisture deficits."

Hail has already become an issue this season, with hail hitting areas last

Friday around Mitchell.

"Hail is always a concern once we reach the spring anytime you have thunderstorms," Today said. "That's just par for the course."

In addition, dry conditions are exerting an impact on the Missouri River and its tributaries, Today said.

"The end of the season snow accumulation in the plains and mountains really fell off," he said. "Inflow to the Missouri River has dropped because of the overall lack of precipitation in the Northern Plains."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will present new information next week during its monthly conference call, Today said.

"The main issue is the (Missouri) river is seeing the same impacts as everyone else with the lack of precipitation," he said. "The river just has a little bit larger buffer, unlike the James and smaller streams which have really shown the lack of precipitation."

The Corps decreased its annual runoff forecast for the Missouri River basin above Sioux City. The forecast was adjusted to 20.3 million acre feet (MAF), which is 80 percent of normal and 4.9 MAF less than average.

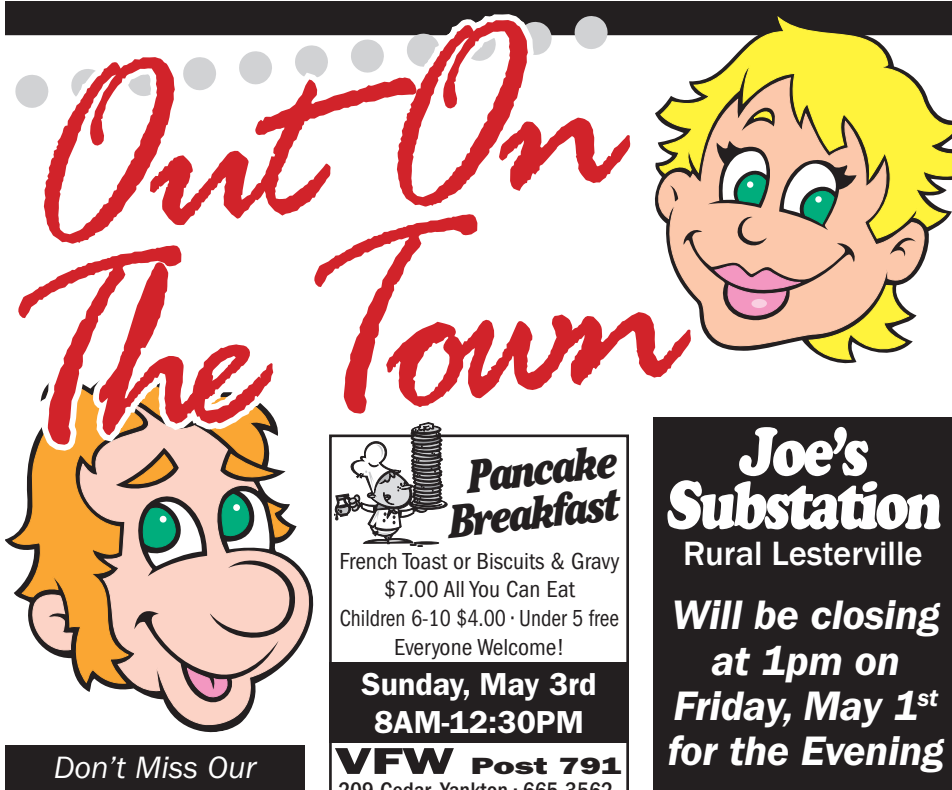
The decreased forecast is due to below-normal mountain snowpack and the lack of plains snow in the basin.

"While below normal runoff is expected, the reservoirs are well positioned to meet all the authorized purposes this year," said Jody Farhat, chief of the Missouri River Basin water management division.

"The Missouri River mainstem reservoir system is designed and operated to provide the Corps with the necessary flexibility to adjust for varying conditions."

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Out On The Town



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French Toast or Biscuits & Gravy
\$7.00 All You Can Eat
Children 6-10 \$4.00 • Under 5 free
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Sunday at 6:30p.m.
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4:30-6:00
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Come Celebrate With Us!

Tucker's Tavern is Celebrating Its 2-Year Anniversary in May!

To Honor this Occasion We Will Offer a **20% Discount to Seniors on WEDNESDAYS.**

- Monday thru Friday — Open for Lunch at 11AM
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- Wednesday — Senior Discount
- Thursday — Beginning in June, Live Radio Broadcasts...Come and Participate!
- Friday — Live Music...Rock with Mike & Jay
- Saturday & Sunday — Brunch is served from 11am-3pm every week
- Saturday — Steak Night & Live Music Occasionally

As weather permits, the patio will be open all summer. Check us out and enjoy! We're also available for private parties Sunday and Monday nights.

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