

Officials Worry About Professor Salary Freeze

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Higher education officials and others in South Dakota say a three-year wage freeze is taking a toll on the university system.

South Dakota State University Provost Laurie Nichols says she knows of at least nine faculty members who left her school this summer, in large part because of the salary freeze.

State budget director Jason Dilges says another year without an increase in faculty pay could be devastating.

The *Sioux Falls Argus Leader* reports that salaries for the state's university professors are already lagging behind those in neighboring states.

Professors at South Dakota's six public universities will average about \$78,300 this school year. That compares to nearly \$111,000 in Nebraska.

Relative Upset County Cremated Victim's Body

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — A relative of a man killed in a crash west of Grand Island is upset about Hall County's decision to cremate the body.

Hall County Attorney Mark Hall told the *Grand Island Independent* that James Lual was cremated the day after the Aug. 18 crash under county rules passed in 2007 that govern indigent burials.

Lual's cousin William Wiir Akot, of Sioux Falls, says that's upsetting. Both men are natives of Sudan, and cremation isn't allowed in their culture.

Hall County Sheriff Jerry Watson says his office didn't think anyone was going to claim Lual's body.

'Today Show' Feature On De Smet Postponed

DE SMET (AP) — A planned "Today Show" feature on the town of De Smet and Laura Ingalls Wilder has been postponed due to Hurricane Irene.

The feature was expected to air sometime Saturday morning, but The *Argus Leader* is reporting it has been postponed because of hurricane coverage.

Rita Anderson of the De Smet Development Corporation says producers for "The Today Show" became interested in the area after it was featured in a *New York Times* article.

Laura Ingalls Wilder chronicled her family's life in a series of novels known as the Little House books. The family lived near and in De Smet after living first in Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota and Iowa.

Decorah Eaglet Fitted With Transmitter

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — The three Decorah eaglets that hatched this spring as millions watched online have left the nest. But one of them was fitted with a satellite transmitter that's allowed researchers to track its growth.

The *Cedar Rapids Gazette* reports that the eaglet, dubbed D-1 as Decorah's first satellite eagle, was fitted with a transmitter on July 12.

She stayed close to the nest, atop a tree at the Decorah Fish Hatchery, until Aug. 14. Then, Raptor Research Project director Bob Anderson says, the young eagle suddenly took off.

The project's nest-cam website was visited more than 206 million times this year as viewers worldwide watched the eaglets mature and leave the nest on June 16.

DECISION 2012 | NEBRASKA

Senate Campaign Turns Caustic

Each Party Accusing Other Of Dirty Tactics As Race Heats Up



Nelson

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — With more than a year to go before the 2012 general election in Nebraska's U.S. Senate race, the campaign rhetoric has already turned ugly, with each side accusing the other of dirty politics.

The state Democratic Party sponsored full-page ads last week in the state's two largest newspapers excoriating GOP challenger Jon Bruning as a hypocrite who rails against government spending while increasing his own budget as the state's attorney general more than 80 percent since 2003 when he was first elected.

The ad also dubbed Bruning "a scavenging raccoon," a reference to Bruning's comparison of welfare recipients to raccoons during a recent campaign speech. Bruning's campaign manager later said Bruning regretted making the comparison.

"With all the time spent raising money, running his businesses, traveling, and playing golf, no wonder Bruning has little time for his day job," the ad stated. "He's like the scavenging raccoon he likes to talk about: hardly working but collecting a million bucks!"

Coinciding with the ad was a fundraising letter from Democratic Sen. Ben Nelson's campaign manager, Paul Johnson, calling Bruning a "verbal bully."

The Nebraska GOP shot back a harshly worded reply aimed at Nelson, peppered with such insults as "cowardly" and "sleazy."

The public letter from state Republican Chairman Mark Fahleson blamed Nelson for the newspaper ads, accusing him of "hiding behind campaign cronies."

Fahleson's letter faulted Nelson for providing the 60th and final vote needed in 2009 to move the Democrats' health care overhaul measure to the full Senate, where it eventually

passed. Fahleson also reiterated criticism of a deal Nelson sought that would have provided Nebraska with federal funding to expand Medicaid, an agreement that opponents dubbed the "Cornhusker Kickback." The proposal was removed before final passage of the overhaul.

"From his sleazy Cornhusker Kickback and his vote for ObamaCare to his empty promises on Medicare and Social Security, Ben Nelson represents everything that's wrong with Washington," Fahleson wrote in the letter. "He's a political coward, desperately clinging to the privileges of a public office he'll do absolutely anything to hold. It won't work this time, and on November 6, 2012, Nebraskans will give Ben the boot."

While both sides sling mud, they also defend their own actions and point the finger of blame at the other side.

"I think more than anything, this came about in reaction to the attorney general's comments comparing the unemployed to scavenging raccoons. I think it's fair, when he makes comments like that, to look what he's been doing with his own time," said Brandon Lorenz, spokesman for the Nebraska Democratic Party. "Unfortunately, the true hurts. I think more than anything, that explains their reaction."

Trent Fellers, Bruning's campaign manager, declared that Nebraskans won't stand for such negative attacks while declaring in the same breath that "Ben Nelson and the Democrats are trying to divert attention from the fact that his votes for Obamacare and big government spending have put our country on the verge of bankruptcy."

The dust-up last week is likely just the beginning, said Mike Wagner, a political science professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"It's never a good sign when high-minded debate is immediately set aside for name-calling," Wagner said. "It's not likely that they're going to start calling each other names now and then over the course of the next few months become more genteel in their lan-

guage. It's probably just going to get worse."

Wagner said that while voters express dislike of such exchanges, some studies have shown that negative campaigning in political races often leads to a better-informed electorate. He said there also is not much evidence that negative ads keep people from showing up to vote.

Political sparring is certainly not foreign to Nebraska voters. Those around in 1996 likely recall the bruising contest for an open U.S. Senate seat in which Republican Chuck Hagel defeated Nelson. In that race, Nelson accused Hagel — then a political unknown — of shady business practices. Hagel relentlessly reminded voters that Nelson, then a sitting governor, had broken an earlier campaign promise to serve out his four-year term as governor.

Two years earlier, the 2nd House District race pitting incumbent Democrat Peter Hoagland against GOP challenger Jon Christensen saw both men taking lie-detector tests over accusations about the validity of campaign accusations. Both men passed the tests, and Christensen went on to win.

Wagner said the 2012 Senate race has not seen that kind of vitriol — yet.

"It's not the nastiest Nebraska has seen, but give them time," he said. "They have a long way before November 2012, and if the race looks like it's going to be close, it will most certainly be extraordinarily negative."

While the name-calling has mostly been limited to the Bruning and Nelson camps, there is still a crowded Republican primary to get through.

Other Republicans vying to challenge Nelson in the general election are Nebraska State Treasurer Don Stenberg, state Sen. Deb Fischer, Schuyler investment adviser Pat Flynn and Spencer Zimmerman, a truck driver from Omaha who has sought state office in Wisconsin.

"I'll bet you a dime to a dollar that the Republican primary gets pretty nasty before all is said and done," Johnson said. "There's already below-the-radar activity that would make you conclude before this is over with that they're going to be going after each other pretty strong."

Killer

From Page 1

strong and J. Ryan McCandless and Tiger were all mortally wounded. The third officer, Tim Doyle, would survive a gunshot wound to the face.

After Tiger died Aug. 3, presiding Circuit Judge Jeff Davis wrote off \$3,813.40 in unpaid fines, attorney's fees and court costs the young man owed the county dating back to September 2007, when Tiger had been 18 years old. From 2007 to 2011, Pennington County judges also suspended or "hardshipped" \$607 in court costs for Tiger.

Those fines, fees and costs were accumulated as a result of 14 misdemeanor convictions that would land him in Pennington County Jail for a total of 430 days, according to court records.

In 2008, Tiger was convicted of a felony, simple assault on a law enforcement officer — a crime that would eventually send him to prison for two years.

Despite writing off some fines, Davis defended how the court system handled Tiger's cases.

"Misdemeanors are taken seriously here," the judge said. "But within the system, you are limited to what you can do with the misdemeanors."

It is obvious, however, that incarceration did nothing to deter to Tiger, Davis said, adding that the courts are seeing more of

what are known as "frequent fliers."

"The harsh reality is we have a whole generation, or generation plus, that has been raised without a good moral compass or sense of values or respect," he said. "And I don't know why, but we're seeing the result and aftermath across the board."

In 2010, local courts processed 20,665 misdemeanor charges and nearly 1,200 felony arrests, according to the state's attorney's office. In July 2011 alone, Brenner's office handled 582 misdemeanors, 93 of which were driving under the influence cases. The rest involved many of the same crimes Tiger was accused of: petty theft, simple assault, drinking in public, minor in possession of alcohol and drug charges.

"The reality is that there's a certain group of people — a very small percentage of our community — that we have a tendency to prosecute over and over again," Brenner said. "We call these people 'frequent fliers.' They're constantly in the criminal justice system."

Even though Tiger was considered one of those cases, Brenner said there was no reason to suspect that he was capable of doing what he did when he and a group of friends were stopped by police for what was termed as suspicious behavior and possible open container violations.

"He didn't even have a weapons charge," he said of Tiger's criminal record. "I wish there was something that would

have flagged us so that we had some sort of indicator."

Tiger's record mostly consists of what Brenner calls "petty offenses" — drinking in public, petty thefts and simple assaults.

Tiger's lone felony conviction happened in August 2007 and resulted from a confrontation with Rapid City police officers. He was charged with simple assault on law enforcement and two counts of slimming — spitting on officers.

He received probation after pleading guilty to the simple assault charge in January 2008.

It wouldn't be long, however, before Tiger would violate his probation in yet another encounter with law enforcement. In March 2008, he fought and spit on Rapid City officers who were attempting to arrest him. His blood alcohol content level was at .394 percent after the arrest, according to court documents.

Judge Davis said justice was "quick and firm" when Tiger violated his probation. In May 2008, he was sentenced to two years in the state prison in Sioux Falls.

After serving about six months in prison, Tiger was released on parole. It would take less than 10 days before he was back in court again, this time in Minnehaha County. On Nov. 6, 2008, he was arrested in Sioux Falls and charged with first-degree burglary, aggravated assault and two counts of simple assault.

The Minnehaha County State's Attorney's Office wanted to prosecute Tiger for the more serious charges of burglary and

aggravated assault but wound up accepting a guilty plea to the misdemeanor charge of simple assault. He received a one-year suspended jail sentence but was sent back to prison after violating the terms of his parole.

Minnehaha County State's Attorney Aaron McGowan said it can be a challenge to find good witnesses in cases involving "frequent fliers" like Tiger.

"It is the unfortunate reality of dealing with criminal prosecutions that a lot of times, you're not going to have an ideal witness or victim," he said.

"A lot of times, your victims in these cases are people that run in the same tough crowd as the defendant, and that can be a real impediment to a successful prosecution in the case."

On Sept. 11, 2009, Tiger was released from prison after serving all of his time for assaulting the Rapid City police officers in 2007. In September 2010, the Pennington County State's Attorney's Office brought burglary charges against Tiger to a grand jury, which declined to indict him.

Tiger's most recent court ap-

pearance was in December 2010, when he was prosecuted for stealing a 12-pack of beer from a convenience store. The second-degree petty offense earned him five days in jail, court costs of \$66 and restitution of \$10.59 for the beer.

While Tiger's criminal record might seem surprising to those unfamiliar with the court system, Brenner said there are many others who have spent far more time in the courts than Tiger did.

"There are certain individuals out there that we are on high alert" around, he said. "We know they have this propensity. They are extraordinarily dangerous."

Judd Thompson, the chief court services officer for the 7th Judicial Circuit, said the court system is not designed to simply punish but to give defendants a chance to turn their lives around — something he said Tiger chose not to do.

"I think our system, we held him accountable," Thompson said. "We provided him opportunities to make changes. He did not take advantage of that."

And when defendants fail to comply with court orders or take

advantage of a second chance, the courts must take action, he said.

"You offer interventions, and when interventions don't happen, the quick accountability response is important. That's what happened," Thompson said.

In the aftermath of the shootings that took place on the afternoon of Aug. 2, Judge Davis has reviewed Tiger's court files, the Pennington County State's Attorney's Office has examined his cases and the police are studying their policies and how to prevent another shootout of that type.

But there is another reality, according to the Rapid City police chief, and that is there may be no clear answer as to why the gunfire erupted at that moment on a residential street corner.

"I think we're going to be thinking about that for a long time, about what caused him to go to the extreme," Allender said. "I think we'll be scratching our heads on the 10th anniversary of this."

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