



Mostly Sunny And Very Warm

9 a.m.: **71** | 3 p.m.: **87** | DETAILS: PAGE 2



YANKTON DAILY PRESS & DAKOTAN

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USDA:

Corn Harvest Ahead Of Schedule

Heat, Drought Help Save
Time, But Will Hurt Yields

BY DAVID PITT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — One of the worst growing seasons most U.S. farmers can remember is coming to an end with a corn harvest that's at least three weeks early thanks to an unusually warm spring and suffocating summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said Monday in its weekly crop progress report that 4 percent of the corn harvest is complete. Normally, just 1 percent of the crop is in at this point in August.

The harvest is much farther along in states such as Kansas, Missouri and Tennessee. While farmers usually have to wait for the corn in their fields to dry or spend money on gas and electricity to dry it with huge blowers, in many areas, triple-digit summer temperatures have done the work.

The USDA predicted a record harvest in the spring, when farmers planted 96.4 million acres of corn — the most since 1937. But the agency has been reducing its estimate since then as unusual heat disrupted pollination and a severe drought centered over the middle of the country left stalks stunted and ears bare. It now says it expects the least amount of corn since 2006, although the tally won't be certain until the harvest is done.

In Kansas, the harvest is 17 percent complete, compared to 3 percent at this time last year. Bob White, a statistician with the National Agriculture Statistics Service office in Topeka, said farmers are now expected to average 93 bushels per acre, compared to 107 last year. Both harvests were far below the record 155 bushels per acre Kansas farmers got in 2009.

The soil statewide is very short on moisture, he said, and it's reflected in the harvest.

"Kansas producers have consistently seen since June high temperatures over 100 degrees, and at the same time have gotten limited amounts of rainfall,"

HARVEST | PAGE 7

THE TRANSITION BEGINS



United Way and Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton Executive Director Pam Kettering (left) will be training Lauren Hanson (right) to succeed her during the next four months. Hanson, the former administrative assistant for the organization, was selected for the position Aug. 8. Kettering will retire Dec. 31.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Yankton's United Way Prepares For Next Executive Director

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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The United Way and Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton has more kicking off right now than its annual fundraising campaign.

With long-time executive director Pam Kettering retiring at the end of the year, the process of training Lauren Hanson to succeed her has also gotten under way.

The two will work hand in hand during the next four months as Kettering trains Hanson to take the reins of the organization that provides funding for 20 community agencies and also assists other programs and initiatives.

Hanson was hired to succeed Kettering Aug. 8 after working two years as the administrative assistant for United Way. A process has now begun to find a new administrative assistant.

After more than 20 years leading the organization, Kettering says she is comfortable leaving it in the hands of Hanson and the United Way board members.

"It's easy to let go because you know it's going to be

good," she stated.

Kettering told the board in January that she intended to retire.

"During the last campaign, I felt there was room for someone else to step in," she said.

The United Way leadership decided to waste no time in looking for a new executive director.

"We started searching for a replacement early on because we didn't know what would come in for applicants, and we felt it was important to open it up to United Way and other non-profit circles," Kettering said.

Hanson, who had previous non-profit experience before working with Yankton's United Way, was eventually selected.

"Lauren came shining out on top," Kettering said. "It made the transition start earlier because we didn't have to wait for weeks for her to give another employer notice."

Hanson and her husband, Tanner, moved to Yankton

TRAINING | PAGE 13

Nebraska

Audit Finds Problems With State Contracts

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A Nebraska agency that handles hundreds of millions of dollars in state contracts didn't follow proper bidding procedures, failed to keep accurate records and may have awarded a \$13.8 million contract to a company that shouldn't have received it, State Auditor Mike Foley said Monday.

A state audit criticized the Materiel Division of the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services for using questionable bidding practices, inadequate record-keeping, erroneous accounting and failing to provide information requested by auditors. Foley said he launched the audit after his office received complaints that the agency wasn't following proper bidding procedures.

"The taxpayers of Nebraska deserve better than what is occurring here," he said.

In one instance, Foley said, state officials awarded a \$13.8 million contract for photocopying equipment to a company based on a score it received after it submitted a bid. But Foley said the score given to Modern Methods, Inc., was not properly documented on the agency's website, and a closer review of records suggested the contract should have gone to a different company.

Officials in the Materiel Division said they "strongly dispute" the audit's findings. Department of Administrative Services Director Carlos Castillo acknowledged that the audit highlighted the need for better record-keeping, but said Foley's characterization of "questionable" practices was "absolutely, unequivocally false."

"That is not the case," said Castillo, who oversees the Materiel Division. "We have a bunch of hard-working people here who protect the integrity of the process. We may have some disagreements over

AUDIT | PAGE 7

YAA Director Leaves Post To Return To YSD

BY ANDREW ATWAL
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After a year with Yankton Area Arts (YAA), Amy Miner, who served as executive director, has decided to pursue what she calls her biggest passion in life — teaching.

However, after her last year with YAA, she is moving back to being a teacher at Yankton School District, where she previously taught.

Miner started teaching in 1991, at taught at YSD in both the middle and high school from 1993-2004. She left her position in 2004 to teach in Hawaii while enrolled in a degree program there. She taught in Hawaii from 2004-11, before returning to Yankton to work for YAA.

"During her short stay as the executive director of YAA, Amy made quite an impact," said Craig Sherman, YAA's assistant director. "Her enthusiasm for the job was evident in everything she did."

Miner said she thoroughly enjoyed her tenure at YAA.

"It's been awesome working here for the last year," she said.

"It's a great organization. When I started, I was not aware of the impact that YAA has in the community here."

Sherman added that Miner will have a lasting impact on YAA.

"She brought in special presenters and performers for the First Friday events when there was no exhibit opening," he said. "She also expanded the Art in Healing programs by adding classes for cancer patients, survivors and caregivers."

Sherman noted that Miner also arranged for all consignment sales at YAA, and for its Crimson Door sales to be handled electronically through a computer. He also said Miner had a big impact in expanding the membership base to include those in their 20s and 30s.

"In my year here, I hope that we have strengthened those connections already established as well as built new ones for the future," Miner said. "I'm proud of the work YAA does for the people in the community of every age and background."

She added there are a lot of positive things going on at YAA right now and the organization is



Amy Miner, who served as the Yankton Area Arts executive director for the past year, has decided to leave the organization to return to the Yankton School District, where she previously taught.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

continues to move forward in a "explosively positive" direction.

"The YAA board is very energized. We have some cool events coming up and have made some strong connections with the community that I think will make a difference in a positive way as YAA

continues to grow," she said.

Miner added that her work as executive director has included a lot of management — managing the budget, managing people, managing time and managing

MINER | PAGE 3

S. Dakota Retirement System Has Modest Investment Return

BY CHET BROKAW
Associated Press

PIERRE — The South Dakota Retirement System's assets dropped slightly in the past year after modest investment gains were offset by the cost of paying benefits to retirees, officials said Monday.

State Investment Officer Matt Clark said his office earned \$142 million on a return of 1.9 percent on stocks and other investments for the year that ended June 30. But after benefits were paid to retirees, the Retirement System's assets dropped to about \$7.84 billion, down \$91 million from a year earlier, he said.

Clark and Wes Tschetter, chairman of the council that advises the Investment Office, told a legislative panel that the key to the Retirement System's health is long-term growth, not

just one year's investment performance.

Tschetter pointed out the 1.9 percent investment gain in South Dakota's system last year was far better than the 1.2 percent average gain by similar state pension systems around the country. In the past decade, South Dakota has far outperformed other similar systems, he said.

Clark noted that the Retirement System suffered big losses during the recession, but gained 26 percent in the year that ended in June 2011.

"One year really doesn't matter," Clark said after the meeting. "I always say all that matters is the longer term, how the decade goes and how the decades aggregate together."

Rob Wylie, executive director of the Retirement System,

RETIREMENT | PAGE 13