



YANKTON DAILY
PRESS & DAKOTAN



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Volume 139
Number 88

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | **14 PAGES** | www.yankton.net

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Springfield

Couple Sentenced For Fire

Johnson's Each Receive 10 Years

From P&D Staff Reports

TYNDALL — A Niobrara, Neb., husband and wife have each received a sentence of 10 years in prison — 9 years of it suspended — for burning down their Springfield restaurant.

First Circuit Judge Glen Eng handed down the identical sentences for 62-year-old Charles Johnson and 56-year-old Kimberly Johnson

during Wednesday's hearing at the Bon Homme County courthouse in Tyndall. The Johnsons could have received different sentences.

The sentences will run concurrently, according to Bon Homme County State's Attorney Lisa Rothschadl. The South Dakota attorney general's office assisted in the prosecution.

The Johnsons, accused of setting fire to Libby's Steakhouse to collect insurance money, were both convicted of felony arson and reckless burning, both Class 4 felonies.

A Bon Homme County jury earlier returned guilty verdicts against the Johnsons, who each faced up to 20 years in prison and \$40,000 in fines.

The October 2010 fire also destroyed another downtown Springfield business and

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Recent rains have bolstered corn and soybeans in the Yankton area. After a below-normal July, Yankton has received more than 2 inches of rain since last Thursday.

Timely Rains Boost Crops

BY DEREK BARTOS

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Recent rains throughout the area are giving crops a well-timed boost.

According to Paul Johnson, SDSU Extension agronomy crops field specialist, farmers had lost some ground in the fields due to cooler temperatures late last month, but the latest moisture is helping them get back on track.

"Overall, the crop conditions in southeast South Dakota are looking really good — a big contrast from last year," he said. "Things weren't in the condition where they were hurting yet, but the rains have helped address that."

Yankton in particular saw abundant moisture this past week. Through the first six days of August, Yankton received 2.60 inches of rain, nearly double the 1.41 inches of rain it saw in the entire month of July.

"As far as corn is concerned, we're probably still a few days behind normal, but not bad," Johnson said. "Beans are a little more up and down, depending on when they got planted, but overall are looking pretty good."

Statewide, crops followed the same pattern, showing substantial progress in recent days.

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Crop Progress report, 69

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Relish

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City Preps 2014 Budget For Final Approval

BY NATHAN JOHNSON

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After suggesting minor changes to the operations portion of the proposed 2014 budget during a workshop Tuesday, the Yankton City Commission is poised to give its final approval to the document in September.

A first reading of the budget will be held Aug. 26, and a final reading will take place during the commission's first meeting in September.

The proposed budget is \$45.6 million, a more than \$5 million increase compared to 2013's \$40.2 million budget.

"That increase from last year's budget is primarily reflective of the funds we are borrowing for the planned water system improvements," City Manager Amy Nelson told the **Press & Dakotan** Wednesday. "In 2014, we are estimating borrowing \$9 million."

She said the increased cost of doing business — paying for wages, health insurance, gas and utilities, for example — also contributed to the increase.

During the budget workshop, Nelson said numerous subjects were discussed.

"We talked about the need to balance quality of life with expenses," Nelson stated. "The Memorial Park pool, Marne Creek trail and the Summit Activities Center don't cover their expenses, but we talked philosophically about the need to provide a high quality of life. We're not in the business of breaking even on all of those things, because we're there to provide a service for everyone."

Also part of the discussion was the continuing importance of retail development as it

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Eye To Eye



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Kyle Klein of Klein's Tree Service studies a pair of eyes that were attached to a tree outside of the G.A.R. Hall Art Gallery in Yankton Tuesday afternoon. Pairs of eyes are now adorning trees around Yankton as Yankton Area Arts promotes 2013 Summer Arts Festival, held in conjunction with Riverboat Days Aug. 16-18. Other eyes can be eyed at First Dakota National Bank (north branch), The Depot Building/Mannes Architects, The Kelly Inn, Morgen Square, The Landing, and Sacred Heart Monastery. The theme of the promotional display is "Have Eyes for the Arts."

YSD Announces Changes To Homecoming Parade Format

BY DEREK BARTOS

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In response to concerns about a student's injury suffered during last year's homecoming parade, Yankton High School (YHS) is planning to remove student-designed floats from its celebration this year.

YHS Principal Jennifer Johnke presented a list of proposed changes to the 2013 Pioneer Days Homecoming Parade during an open meeting Wednesday at the school. The gathering was held to inform the community about revisions being considered to prevent future injuries to students, as well as to protect involved parties from liability concerns.

Last year, a female freshman injured her leg when it was run over by a float.

"It's a tradition that Yankton has really become accustomed to having that a lot of people look



Johnke

forward to, whether it's students, members of the community, parents or teachers," Johnke said. "But we needed to look at different things to keep our students safe but yet carry on the tradition."

At the meeting, Roger Smith of Smith Insurance presented accident liability information that the school had considered in discussing changes to the parade. Smith said that the owners of the vehicles pulling the floats are held primarily responsible for any accidents. The drivers of the vehicles and the school could also be involved in any claims.

Should the school continue to include floats in its parade, Smith recommended that all vehicle

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Former DM&E Head To Join Regents Board

PIERRE (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard is appointing former Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad president Kevin Schieffer to the South Dakota Board of Regents.

Schieffer left DM&E in 2008 after Canadian Pacific Railway bought the company following 12 years at its helm.

He also served as U.S. Attorney for South Dakota from 1991 to 1993, worked in private practice for three years and served as chief of staff to U.S. Senator Larry Pressler from 1982 to 1991.

Schieffer earned his bachelor's degree from the University of South Dakota and is a graduate of Georgetown University School of Law.

Daugaard says Schieffer understands the value of higher education.

Schieffer replaces Carole Pagones, who retired from the regents last month after 10 years of service.



Schieffer

White House Floats Health Care Fix For Congress

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It started out a political "gotcha" — an amendment to President Barack Obama's health care law requiring members of Congress and staffers to get the same coverage offered to uninsured Americans. Wednesday, the administration tossed it back in the lap of Congress.

Proposed rules — issued when the halls of Congress are empty for summer recess — say lawmakers' offices should individually decide whether staffers are subject to a health law provision that would require them to switch their insurance from the federal plan to new coverage coming next year under Obama's overhaul.

The potential impact of the provision,

authored by Iowa Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley, has been a huge source of anxiety for congressional staffers accustomed to getting their health insurance just like other feds, from the largest employer health care plan in the world.

The proposal does clarify that the government will continue to pay its standard share of premiums, resolving one of the biggest unknowns about the impact of Grassley's amendment. Many had been warning of a Capitol Hill "brain drain" if staffers were suddenly forced to foot the entire cost of their health insurance premiums.

But questions remain about such matters as retiree coverage and definitions of

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