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# 'Pets In The Park'

Program Teaches  
Developmentally  
Disabled, Children  
About Animal Care

BY NATHAN JOHNSON

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Although there was a lot of horsing around going on in Memorial Park on a recent summer afternoon, no one was getting in trouble for it.

In fact, Lisa Brasel, the animal control officer for the Yankton Police Department, was encouraging people to interact with her four miniature horses.

She brought "Chocolate" Chip, Nicole, Haley and Ellie out as part of the "Pets in the Park" program. They were the stars of the last of six sessions that were held during the inaugural run of the series, which was designed for Ability Building Services (ABS) clients but also had a much wider audience of park users.

"I think the animals help them open up and talk more about things," Brasel said of the clients of the private not-for-profit community agency that provides pre-vocational activities, vocational training, residential training and other support services needed by people with developmental disabilities. "We've sat down here and had great conversations about anything. I try to get a little bit across to them about the animals and how to care for them. I'll also answer any questions they have."

Brasel explained to the attendees that the miniature horses eat the same things as regular horses and how their hooves need care. She got laughs after mentioning they are sometimes dressed up in costumes.

When asked if the horses bite, Brasel said they do not.

"The only thing they do that hurts is step on your foot," she stated.

When middle schoolers approached the park shelter after school got out, the were encouraged by the ABS clients to pet the horses and were told the animals wouldn't bite.

In addition to the miniature horses, a regular horse, baby goats, Corgis and Flemish giant rabbits were also featured during the course of the program.

Ryan Lemon, holding Nicole

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

**ABOVE:** Yankton Animal Control Officer Lisa Brasel created the program and brought her own pets to meet the public. Here, she introduces (from left) Ellie, Chip and Haley to some visitors. Brasel said she brought her own animals because she knew how they would act around strangers. **TOP:** Although the "Pets in the Park" program in Memorial Park was designed for Ability Building Services clients, many children also enjoyed the six sessions. One boy even decided to give Nicole, a miniature horse, a kiss during his visit with her.

# S. Dakota Pheasant Numbers Plummet

GF&P Says Pheasant  
Count Is Down 64 Percent

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Hundreds of thousands of pheasants mysteriously disappeared from the eastern and central South Dakota in the past year. Not enough chicks hatched this summer to offset the losses.

Possible reasons are many. Drought turned severe in August a year ago and didn't let up in many places until a cold and wet spring this year. There has been continued conversion of farm acres from conservation reserve to crops. That has meant less dense nesting cover and easier meals for predators.

And there seems in many places to be fewer insects this summer such as crickets and caterpillars that comprise young pheasants' diets for the first month of life.

Despite no single answer, there is no speculation about the result.

The state Game, Fish and Parks Department released its annual brood survey results on Friday afternoon. Many people expected the pheasant numbers to be done, but GFP still left many South Dakotans stunned with its declaration of a 64 percent decrease.

GFP reported a state average of just 1.52 pheasants per mile along the 108 highway routes, each 30 miles long, driven each morning July 25 through Aug. 15. The average last year at this time was 4.19 pheasants per mile.

The situation points to be the most difficult autumn in many years for hunters and for the farmers, restaurant and motel operators and other business people who depend on them. The main season opens Oct. 19 and runs through Jan. 5.

Ninety-three of GFP's survey routes had fewer birds than in 2012, according to Travis Runia, GFP's upland game biologist who oversees the brood-survey project.

Roosters were down 49 percent, hens 57 percent and broods of chicks 62 percent. The broods were smaller too: 5.50 chicks on average vs. 6.26 last year.

Runia reported that 50 percent of the hens that had GFP radio collars last year died between Aug. 15 and Nov. 15. The numbers of hens counted in the past decade peaked in 2008 at more than 4,000 along the routes and have been in a long decline since, dropping

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# Experts: Leave Dogs At Home

Reports Received Of Canines Dying In Cars During Heat Wave

BY NATHAN JOHNSON

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Reports have been received of several dogs dying after being left in vehicles during this week's heat wave, according to Yankton's animal control officer.

Lisa Brasel said she has been notified of the deaths by local veterinarians.

"People leaving water in their

cars while they go into the store is not enough," she stated. "They need to leave the dogs home."

Dr. Bruce Teachout at Yankton's Animal Health Clinic said he is aware of two canine deaths related to being left in a vehicle in the last couple of weeks. He treated a third dog that had been outside on a chain.

"It didn't succumb but had major health issues because of the

heat," Teachout stated.

"Those dogs (who overheat) need to be cooled down with cool water, not ice water, and, depending on how bad they are, put on IV fluids," he added. "When that body temp gets so high, it starts cooking the tissues inside. It does a lot of tissue damage."

Extreme heat and humidity can

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# Pearson To Head Department Of Human Services

PIERRE (AP) — A Yankton woman has been appointed secretary of the Department of Human Services.



Pearson

Since 2000, Gloria Pearson has been executive director of Ability Building Services, a Yankton community support provider that serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Before that, she was executive director of the Community Support Providers of South Dakota, and for 11 years she led what is now Dakota Milestones, a community support provider in Chamberlain.

Human Services oversees the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the South Dakota Developmental Center at Redfield.

Pearson is a Sisseton native and a graduate of South Dakota State University and Northern State University.

She starts Nov. 4. Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced the appointment Friday.

# YHS Students Participate In 'Respect Retreat'

BY ROB NIELSEN

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Juniors at Yankton High School were given a respite from their usual class schedules Thursday to attend a Respect Retreat hosted by Youth Frontiers. This was the first time Youth Frontiers had been to YHS.

YHS Principal Dr. Jennifer Johnke said she saw the 234 students really get into the day-long program.

"They're doing a really great job of getting the kids involved," Johnke said. "There's great interaction, there's great energy and you can tell the kids are excited about this."



Johnke

Johnke said the reaction Youth Frontiers had gotten in other schools prompted her to explore bringing the program to Yankton. "We had heard about other schools in the area that worked with them, and (they) really gave us positive reviews," she said. "So we were very excited when we could get this implemented this school year."

Retreat Director Kesiah Kolbow said there was one main goal for

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ROB NIELSEN/P&D

**Youth Frontiers Retreat Director Kesiah Kolbow leads the Yankton High School juniors in dance during Thursday's Respect Retreat. The event was designed to encourage students to treat each other with respect.**