

SD Corn Crop Could Achieve Record Yield This Year

PIERRE (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is projecting a record corn yield in South Dakota this year. USDA's latest production report forecasts the average corn yield in the state at 160 bushels per acre, 6 percent above the record of 151 bushels set in 2009.

Randy Hascall with the South Dakota Corn Growers Association tells the Capital Journal that members are "seeing some of the best corn they have grown." He credits timely rains.

Total corn production in South Dakota this year is still expected to be down 3 percent from last year because of a drop in acres. Production is forecast at 760 million bushels.

Man Injured In Mobile Home Blaze

YORK, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a man who was hurt in a mobile home fire in York has been taken to a Lincoln hospital for treatment.

The fire at the York Mobile Plaza erupted around noon. Firefighters found the man lying in a yard near the home when they arrived.

Fire Chief Kevin Stuhr told the York News-Times that the man was in the mobile home when the fire began and suffered serious injuries. The man's name wasn't released.

Stuhr says preliminary indicates are that the blaze may have been started by discarded smoking material. He says the home and its contents are total losses.

Man Threw Cocktails In School Lot

GRETNA, Neb. (AP) — A 22-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of throwing Molotov cocktails into a Gretna elementary school's parking lot.

According to the Sarpy County Sheriff's Office, three people walked onto Thomas Elementary property around 3:30 a.m. Tuesday. The sheriff's office says the suspect ignited at least two Molotov cocktails before tossing them into the school parking lot.

Authorities say the pavement was scorched but the school building was not damaged.

The suspect faces charges of possession of a destructive device and criminal mischief of less than \$500.

Injured Gymnast Leaves Rehab Hospital

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A college gymnast injured in a 23-foot fall has left a Lincoln rehabilitation hospital after months of treatment for a brain injury.

Heather Boulais, of Laguna Niguel in Southern California, fell on Jan. 14 while installing aerial silks in a gym before a practice by the acrobatics team at Union College in Lincoln. She left Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital on Thursday.

Her father, Terry Boulais, told Omaha television station KETV that, "to see her stand, take the steps, is very humbling."

The college says an investigation into the accident is continuing.

Lincoln Attorney Disbarred Conviction

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A Lincoln attorney convicted and sentenced to one to three years in prison for what police said was a knife attack on her husband has been disbarred.

The Nebraska Supreme Court on Friday issued the disbarment of 44-year-old Kristin Renee Walz, who pleaded no contest in 2012 to making terroristic threats. Police say Walz attacked her husband with a knife, cutting his arm and leg, in February 2011.

Her husband told police his wife had cut him but later recanted, saying he implicated his wife while under the influence of drugs and sleep deprivation.

Despite her plea, Walz has maintained her innocence. In its order, the Nebraska Supreme Court said Walz's felony conviction for a violent crime "damages the reputation of the bar and threatens public confidence in the profession."

Highway

From Page 1A

Malone said.

"What we're doing is showing folks that we're not taking away a couple of lanes," he said. "We're looking at traffic problems, money and (traffic) capacity."

A two-lane highway would serve the current needs, said Mike Behm, the DOT project development program manager.

"A two-lane facility would be able to handle their traffic now and what we anticipate in the future," he said. "The volume that exists there now is more in line with a two-lane highway with a turn lane."

What if the traffic volume would increase dramatically in the future?

"We feel we're able to handle the development that would occur," Behm said. "As things change, we would ensure we have the transportation system that can handle it."

In looking at another factor, the DOT points to an intersection safety study by Felsburg, Holt and Elevig of Lincoln, Nebraska. The study looked studied 12 divided four-lane intersections in South Dakota.

"These intersections had the lowest traffic volumes of intersections reviewed, and it was on the lower end of the crash and severity rates with one exception," the DOT presentation said. "The east junction of S.D. Highway 37 had the highest crash rate and the second highest severity rate."

The crash numbers for 2005-14 showed S.D. Highway 37W, S.D. Highway 37E and S.D. 25 saw 32 crashes and 16 injuries; Tyndall saw 18 crashes and 10 injuries; and Tabor saw five crashes and three injuries.

The intersection fatalities were three at or near Tyndall, the presentation added.

The \$14.17 million price tag for the proposed High-

way 50 project is broken down into two segments. The 3.5 miles of reconstruction is forecast to cost \$8.33 million, while the 12.9 miles of resurfacing is estimated to cost \$5.84 million.

The project includes resurfacing of two segments: from the east junction of S.D. Highway 46 and six miles toward Avon, and from five miles west of Tyndall through Tabor.

The DOT has also proposed an alternative involving access to Hakl Street in Tabor, Malone said.

By timing the Highway 50 project for the 2020 time frame, the DOT would save money by completing resurfacing and reconstruction at the same time, Behm said. In addition, the project could be done at the same time as other work in the region.

The DOT wants to develop the proposal by next June so the state Transportation Commission can consider it for the next STIP plan finalized in August 2016, Behm said. The reconstruction project would be covered by safety funds, he said.

Studies indicate the Highway 50 project would take one construction season, Malone said. The project would have minimal impact, and access to homes and businesses would be maintained, he said.

The DOT would conduct a speed limit study following completion of the Highway 50 project, Behm said. The preliminary thought is 45-60 miles per hour, according to one study.

Malone encourages the public to offer input on the Highway 50 proposal.

"We'll take a look at the comments and take a look at what we have going in front of us (for projects and resources)," he said.

"This is a proposal and not set in stone. We will look at all the comments, discuss them and then make plans."

For more information, visit online at <http://sddot.com/dot/publicmeetings>.

Follow @RDockendorf on Twitter.

California Highway Patrol Officers, Others Eyed In Killing

BY PAUL ELIAS

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Three current and former California Highway Patrol officers, a prominent criminal defense lawyer and five other people were arrested Friday in connection with the disappearance and killing of a Central Valley man.

Law enforcement officials announced the arrests at a brief news conference in Modesto. The officials said the nine people played a part in the killing of Corey Kauffman, 26, or helped cover it up and mislead investigators.

Kauffman was reported missing in April 2012. His body was found by hunters in August 2013 in rural Mariposa County near Yosemite National Park.

Investigators with the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department said Modesto attorney Frank Carson orchestrated the killing and enlisted the help of two brothers who own a liquor store in Turlock.

Investigators say Carson believed Kauffman and others were stealing valuable antiques from storage containers on his property and that he wanted to stop the thefts by sending a message.

Kauffman was on his way to steal from Carson when he disappeared, according to a 326-page court filing police used to get arrest warrants.

Carson's attorney, Percy Martinez, said his client is innocent and his arrest was politically motivated.

Carson ran unsuccessfully for district attorney last year. He has been under investigation since Kauffman disappeared, Martinez said. Investigators searched Carson's property in 2012.

"We welcome the opportunity to fight this in court," Martinez said.

The CHP officers were all associated with the brothers and the Turlock liquor store.

CHP officers Scott McFarlane and Eduardo Quintanar are suspected of obstructing the investigation. They are accused of lying about their involve-

ment with the liquor store and the two brothers who own it.

Investigators say Quintanar told one of the brothers to tell another suspect to check under his car for police tracking devices.

Former CHP Officer Walter Wells is suspected of murder.

"The entire department and I are appalled at the mere thought that one former and two current employees played any role in this incident," CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow said.

Farrow said Wells left the CHP several weeks ago and the other two officers have been placed on administrative leave.

Carson's wife, Georgia Geanette Defilippo, is also accused of participating in the killing. Defilippo's daughter was also arrested on suspicion of conspiracy and being an accessory.

All of the suspects remained jailed Friday.

Relatives Upset Family Wasn't Quickly Helped Before Shooting

Relatives upset family wasn't quickly helped before shooting

By JUAN A. LOZANO

Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Relatives of a Houston couple and their six children who were fatally shot in their home can't understand why it took authorities four visits and repeated 911 calls before going inside, a family friend said Friday.

Jesi Greening, a spokeswoman for the family, shared with reporters Facebook messages that one of the victims, Valerie Jackson, had sent to her mother in Minnesota saying she was being held at gunpoint. One of the messages indicated Jackson was alive after deputies' first visit to the home on Aug. 8, Greening said.

"It just doesn't make sense to us that the house was not entered much, much earlier," Greening said from Minnesota during a conference call.

Jackson's ex-domestic partner, David Conley, 48, had been jailed, facing capital murder charges in the deaths of the six children and two adults, until he was taken Friday under guard to a Houston hospital for treatment of what officials called a non-life-threatening, pre-existing medical condition. Authorities say Conley handcuffed most of the eight

family members and eventually shot each of them in the head. His attorney hasn't returned messages seeking comment about the allegations.

Killed in the shooting were: Jackson, 40; her husband, Dwayne Jackson, 50; and her children, 13-year-old Nathaniel, 11-year-old Honesty, 10-year-old Dwayne, 9-year-old Caleb, 7-year-old Trinity and 6-year-old Jonah. Authorities say Nathaniel was Conley's son from his relationship with Valerie Jackson, while the Jacksons were the parents of the other five children.

The Harris County Sheriff's Office on Thursday released a timeline of events from last weekend's deadly shooting that showed deputies made four separate visits to the house over about a nine-hour period before going inside.

Deputy Thomas Gilliland, a sheriff's office spokesman, didn't return a phone call seeking comment Friday. Investigators have said that they didn't have enough information to go into the home until they saw the body of one of the children through a window during the fourth visit.

Greening said that on the day of the shooting, Valerie Jackson had first made three posts on Facebook, writing that she needed help, for

someone to call police and that this wasn't a joke.

At 10:23 a.m., Jackson's mother, Barbara Yanske, got a private message on Facebook from her daughter that read "911 911 911 911."

At 10:27 a.m., Jackson sent another message that said, "He has phone and will ring. DVD has gun."

At 10:45 a.m., Yanske replied, "I called. What's going on?"

According to the sheriff's department, deputies first arrived at the home at 10:49 a.m.

According to Greening, at 11:57 a.m., Jackson sent another message to her mother saying, "Tuhey knck left."

"It's spelled a little bit funny, but it's clearly, 'They knock left,'" Greening said. "That was the last contact we had with Valerie."

At 12:15 p.m., Jackson's family is told by the sheriff's department that no one responded when deputies knocked and they didn't have probable cause to enter, Greening said.

"How it wasn't probable cause when they are being told that someone has a gun inside, we don't understand that," she said.

Legal experts say that while police can't typically go into a home without permission or a search warrant, exceptions would be allowed under what's known

as exigent circumstances, where there is an emergency situation.

Greening said family members called Conley at 12:40 p.m. and he told them he was across town and didn't know where Jackson was.

Jackson's family made additional 911 calls to the sheriff's department throughout the rest of the day. They were told at 9:15 p.m. that authorities were going into the home after discovering Conley had a warrant for his arrest, Greening said.

It was at that point that the child's body was seen through the window.

Deputies trying to enter the home were met by gunfire from Conley, according to the sheriff's department timeline. A standoff ensued between Conley and authorities until he surrendered at 11:58 p.m.

A funeral for the victims is set for Monday in Houston. The family will be buried in La Crosse, Wisconsin. A GoFundMe account has been set up by Jackson's family to raise money for burial expenses.

Also Friday, the judge handling Conley's case amended a sweeping gag order. The amended order still prevents lawyers, law enforcement officials and witnesses from speaking to the media.

Disney Teases 'Finding Dory,' 'Toy Story 4' At Fan Event

BY LINDSEY BAHR

AP Film Writer

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Beanstalks will grow, animals will walk upright, oceans will part, a forgetful fish will remember her family, and toys will fall in love in Disney and Pixar Animation's upcoming films.

The studio previewed its animation slate and made a number of announcements at the fan convention D23 Expo on Friday, with special appearances from some voice actors including Ellen DeGeneres and Dwayne Johnson.

John Lasseter, the chief creative officer of Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios, hosted the presentation, where he announced a Jack and the Beanstalk adaptation, "Gigantic," and the title of their Dios de los Muertos film, "Coco." It was also revealed that Shakira would be both providing an original song for and voicing a character in "Zootopia."

"Gigantic" director Nathan Greno ("Tangled") said his film would be the definitive version of the fairy tale — with a few spins, including the addition of a 60-foot tall, 11-year-old girl who Jack meets when he climbs up the beanstalk. "Frozen" songwriters Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez, who penned the hit "Let It Go," will be writing the songs.

Scouts

From Page 1A

Despite technological upgrades over recent years, Boy Scouts tries to keep things as simple as possible.

"It's primitive," said Veldhuizen. "There's no electricity or air conditioning, but it's a place for the boys to get away and practice camping skills."

Boy Scout members learn many things nature-related, as well as anything from first aid to water sport skills; however, Scouts isn't just about learning survival

skills. "Scouts learn outdoor and leadership skills and build self-confidence," Merrill said. "They're taught how to handle situations that may or may not happen to them."

Part of Boy Scouts involves taking the members on various trips throughout the country, from backpacking in New Mexico to canoeing in the Florida Key West.

When one parent asked if supervising these trips made Merrill nervous, he responded, "They (the kids) know that they've been trained how to treat one another with respect and not kill each other. If they do

create damage where they shouldn't, they know I will take revenge."

Being involved with the Scouts for almost 50 years has allowed Merrill to see changes big and small come to the program.

"We used to camp in canvas and now it's nylon. There's the inclusion of women in leadership roles and openly gay people can be involved," he explained.

What hasn't changed is the Scouts' true core. "We still teach self-confidence and leadership skills. The Scout oath, law and promise have been there for 100 plus years," said Merrill.

Boy Scouts is very much

as director and pushed its release date back over a year, eventually replacing him with Peter Sohn.

The film puts a new spin on the classic boy and his dog tale. Here, the "boy" is a friendly Apatosaurus named Arlo (Raymond Ochoa) and the "dog" is a feral child who walks on all fours. His name is Spot.

Producer Denise Ream said a main goal was to create "a world that feels visceral and immersive."

They used new technologies to fashion "majestic landscapes," including some strikingly realistic-looking rapids, which sweep Arlo away from his family into unknown territories.

Directors Byron Howard and Rich Moore were likewise there to preview "Zootopia," out March 4, which is set in a human-like city populated by animals who walk upright, wear clothes and hold human jobs. The film centers on bunny cop Judy Hopps ("Once Upon a Time's" Ginnifer Goodwin) who heads to the big city to pursue her law enforcement dreams. There she gets entangled with a mischievous fox, Nick Wilde (Jason Bateman).

The bi-annual convention, now in its fourth year, runs through Sunday.

a family-oriented program, and Merrill strongly encourages parents to get involved.

"If parents don't participate, they're missing out on one of the finest opportunities to watch a child grow into a man," he said. "They don't have to coach or supervise, but they have to be there."

"Kids can learn how to be self-reliant and leaders, but they have to be given the opportunity to do it," Merrill said. "That's what the Scouts are about."

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