

Investigation Continues Into S.D. Plane Crash

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Investigators are continuing to look into what caused a plane carrying four men to crash just moments after takeoff near the Sioux Falls Regional Airport.

Daniel Swets, Kevin Anderson and Joshua Lambrecht were headed to FIRST Lego League competition in Rapid City when the twin engine Cessna airplane piloted by Brian Blake crashed shortly after takeoff Friday in Sioux Falls. All four men were killed.

KSFY reports that what was left of the Cessna 421C was removed from the field near the Sioux Falls Regional Airport late Sunday night. It was transported to an undisclosed location so investigators could examine it for clues.

The National Transportation Safety Board is leading the investigation, and a preliminary crash report should be ready in about two weeks.

Police ID Victim In Car-Pedestrian Accident

RAPID CITY (AP) — Authorities have identified a 51-year-old Rapid City man killed Saturday evening in a car-pedestrian accident.

Rapid City police say Terry Brown was killed when he was struck by a car driven by a 57-year-old Rapid City man around 5:30 p.m. Saturday in Rapid City. Brown was transported to a local hospital, where he died.

Police believe alcohol was a factor in the crash.

Beetle Infestation Closes Snowmobile Trail

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The U.S. Forest Service says a major Black Hills snowmobile route in the Dumont area will be closed due to the mountain pine beetle epidemic.

The Argus Leader reports that portions of snowmobile Trail 2 will be closed to snowmobiling this season as crews remove trees infested with the beetles.

Officials say reroutes of the Black Hills snowmobile trail system will likely be common over the next several years because of the beetle problem.

Snowmobile trails are open in Black Hills National Forest from Thursday through March 31.

17 Drunken Drivers Snared In Lincoln

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Under a special enforcement effort, Lincoln police arrested 17 suspected drunken drivers in four hours.

Capt. Jim Davidsaver told the Lincoln Journal Star that the arrests were made between 11 p.m. Saturday and 3 a.m. Sunday. Davidsaver says that's around twice the number usually arrested on a weekend night.

He says the extra enforcement effort was paid for by a grant. It covered the costs of three additional officers to patrol for drunken drivers.

Poaching Tips Spur 394 Cases In Past Year

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A program that offers reward money for tips about illegal hunting or fishing in South Dakota paid out \$8,725 last year.

Turn In Poachers is run through the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

The Argus Leader reports that the program produced 394 investigations in the fiscal year ending June 30. It resulted in 146 arrests and citations that netted \$77,000 in fines and civil penalties.

The agency says there have been more than 3,000 arrests and more than \$1 million in fines and civil penalties since the program began in 1984.

Occupy Neb. Group To Protest With Puppets

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Two 8-foot-tall puppets will be visiting a couple of Lincoln businesses as part of an Occupy protest.

Occupy Lincoln member Dana Garrison told the *Lincoln Journal Star* that the puppets are part of a five-minute comedy sketch that skewers the federal government's bailout of banks and other businesses.

Garrison says the protesters will visit two businesses near the Occupy Lincoln tent city on Centennial Mall. Garrison says the protesters will leave if asked to by the business owners or managers.

She says breaking the law or getting arrested is not the goal. Rather, Garrison says, the protesters wish to share their message.

The Occupy movement began in New York, decrying what protesters see as corporate greed and the growing gap between rich and poor.

Firefighter Rescues Dog From Neb. Lake

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — A firefighter has rescued a Chesapeake Bay retriever from the icy waters of a Grand Island lake.

The *Grand Island Independent* reports that Gary Jacobson had taken his dog for a walk at Pier Park Lake around 7:30 a.m. Sunday.

The dog, Chipper, ventured out onto the ice, and it gave way beneath her.

She couldn't get back onto the ice, so she struggled in the icy water. Jacobson called 911, and the Grand Island Fire Department responded.

Firefighter Troy Shubert put on a special insulated suit. Other firefighters attached a rope to him, and he went into the water to retrieve Chipper.

Soon both were back onto dry land.

Jacobson says Chipper was checked out by a veterinarian, who reported that the dog would be fine.

Corps Short On Repair Money

BY HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
Associated Press

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced Monday that it has money available so far to fix only 11 of 68 Missouri River levees and is draining extra water from upstream reservoirs to nurse the flood-battered system through 2012.

The damaged levees are in Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas, officials announced during a meeting of the Missouri River Flood Task Force in suburban Kansas City. About half are federal levees and the other half are part of a program in which the corps helps pay for flood repairs if the levees pass routine inspections.

"The reality is that not all damages can be repaired this year because of funding and time limitations," said Brig. Gen. John R. McMahon, commander of the corps' northwestern division office.

The \$68 million available is only sufficient to help pay for the 11 most crucial projects. The goal is to fix those levees at least enough to protect against a 25-year flood, although many provided 100-year flood protection pre-

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viously, said John Leighow, chief of the readiness and contingency operations division in the northwestern division of the corps.

It would cost \$253 million to make all the Missouri River Basin repairs. That money is part of the more than \$2 billion the corps estimates it needs to repair the damage to the nation's levees, dams and riverbanks caused by this year's excessive flooding. A supplemental appropriation bill is stalled in Congress, and the corps has been focusing its limited money on fixing levees that protect communities and facilities such as water treatment plants.

For now, the corps has been shuffling money around in its existing budget to pay for the levee fixes, Leighow said.

"We are trying to be in the best possible

position come March 1," he said.

One step the corps has taken to help is to wait an extra week to drop to lower winter-release levels on the Missouri River, allowing it to empty extra water from the six upstream reservoirs. The corps has been stepping down the releases slowly and plans to hit the target level Wednesday.

"We don't anticipate that we will have a repeat of this year next year," said Jody Farhat, chief of the corps' Missouri River Basin Water Management office. "But the system is vulnerable and that is why we are releasing this additional water. The levees aren't repaired, so having some additional storage ... may allow us more flexibility to operate next summer."

Water levels must be dropped in winter to avoid flood-causing ice jams, but this year's mild fall weather allowed the corps to delay the reductions. Besides the helpful fall weather, Farhat also found hope in the relatively light snowpack.

"It's still very, very early," she said. "There is some snow out there, but isn't as heavy as going into last winter or the winter before it."

Heineman Supports Speeding Up Pipeline

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Gov. Dave Heineman said Monday that he supports efforts to accelerate federal approval of a controversial crude oil pipeline through Nebraska.

The Republican governor told reporters in a conference call that he'd like to see the Keystone XL project move forward as soon as state officials agree to a new, acceptable route in Nebraska.

Pipeline developer TransCanada agreed to divert the 1,700-mile project away from the sensitive Nebraska Sandhills after Heineman called a special session aimed at the Keystone XL. The project will face a state environmental review before Heineman makes a recommendation to the U.S. State Department, which must approve or deny a federal permit. "I certainly support expediting everything we're doing with the Keystone XL project," Heineman said Monday, noting that the state has already hired HDR Engineering of Omaha to study alternate routes.

Environmentalists say the Canada-to-Texas pipeline still threatens the state's water and wildlife, and dispute claims that it will create thousands of jobs or re-

S.D. Seeks To Improve Community Web Service

PIERRE (AP) — A state agency is starting a program to help South Dakota schools, libraries and other community facilities improve their Internet services.

The Bureau of Information and Telecommunications will provide the local institutions with consulting services on their equipment and Internet connections.

The services will be provided to school districts, libraries, medical facilities, public safety offices and other government offices.

State officials say the project also can provide grants to help facilities buy equipment and services that improve their Internet systems.



Heineman

pipeline.

The U.S. State Department has said it will delay a decision until 2013, after the presidential election, but congressional Republicans are attempting to force an earlier decision. One provision in a bill to extend the payroll tax holiday and unemployment benefits would force the State Department to rule on the project before the election.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality announced last week that Pat Rice, who oversees water quality, will assume the lead role in the state review. State environmental officials have said the review will take an estimated six to nine months.

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State Department Says Republican Bill Could Kill XL Pipeline Project

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration says a Republican bill to fast-track approval of an oil pipeline from Canada could lead to the project's demise.

In a statement Monday, the State Department warned that congressional interference with the Keystone XL pipeline could backfire. The State Department has authority over the project because it crosses an international border.

The statement said that if Congress imposes an arbitrary deadline for a permit decision, it could prevent the administration from meeting environmental laws that govern the approval process.

In that case, officials say the department would be unable to make a determination to issue a permit.

GOP lawmakers back a bill to require approval of the pipeline within 60 days. They say the Canada-to-Texas pipeline will help create jobs without taxpayer money.

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