

Integra Plastics Ready To Expand In S.D.

MADISON (AP) — A South Dakota-based company is preparing to begin production in a new 49,000-square-foot plant at Brandon. Madison-based Integra Plastics plans to be in full production next month. President Mick Green tells the *Argus Leader* that the expansion will bring 14 jobs to the community. Integra Plastics also has added 20 jobs at its Madison facility, which had a staff of 50 people. The company that makes plastic covers and liners also has a plant in Grand Forks, N.D.

Grant To help Identify Antibiotics In Plants

SPEARFISH (AP) — A \$185,000 state grant will help Black Hills State University researchers further refine their work to identify specific chemicals in native plants that have new antibiotic compounds. WestCore Laboratory director Dr. Cynthia Anderson tells the *Black Hills Pioneer* that the money will help the university purchase equipment that can be used across science disciplines to enhance research capabilities. One project from organic chemist Dr. John Dixon involves examining South Dakota plants that Native Americans have traditionally used for medicinal purposes. Anderson says Dixon and his students have been able to extract specific chemicals that contain new antibiotic compounds. The grant money comes from a special performance improvement fund that is intended to improve research capacity at each of the state's six universities.

Two S.D. Men Charged In Separate Farm Thefts

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Two South Dakota men are charged in separate farm theft cases. Mitchell-area farmer Scott Suelflow is accused of taking about \$4,250 worth of corn from a bin in rural Davison County. *The Daily Republic* reports that he has been released from jail after posting \$600 bond. KTIV-TV reports that Jamie Shape of Bridgewater is accused of stealing hay that was bound for a northwest Iowa dairy. He was arrested after employees at Meadowvale Dairy near Rock Valley, Iowa, said they found discrepancies in semitrailer loads of hay that had been delivered by Shape and his drivers. Authorities believe the alleged thefts have been going on for several months and involve more than \$10,000 worth of hay. Shape declined comment to The Associated Press. A telephone listing for Suelflow was disconnected.

Lincoln Firm Sued For Underpaying Workers

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The U.S. Department of Labor is suing a Lincoln property management company for underpaying its employees by \$14,642 over the past three years. The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that Realty Linc Inc. is accused of failing to pay overtime at the correct rate, paying at least one employee less than minimum wage and failing to keep proper records. The lawsuit says the company, which does business as Realty Center, Realty Center Property Management and Realty Lincoln, owes the money to 13 current and former employees. The Lincoln company hasn't responded to the lawsuit, which was filed earlier this month.

Neb. Man Gets Jail For DUI On Lawn Mower

NORTH PLATTE, Neb. (AP) — A North Platte man has been sentenced to a year in jail for being drunk when he drove his lawn mower on a city street on his way to a liquor store. North Platte television station KNOP-TV reports that Donald Wymer was sentenced Tuesday in a Lincoln County court to 365 days in the county jail for a third-offense drunken driving conviction. The 51-year-old Wymer's driver's license also was suspended for 15 years, and he was ordered to pay a \$600 fine. Police say an officer saw Wymer drive to liquor store on his riding lawn mower. After he left the liquor store, a Nebraska State Patrol trooper stopped him in a residential neighborhood, where he failed a field sobriety test.

Extension Has A New Radio Tool For Farmers

BROOKINGS (AP) — The South Dakota State University Extension Service has a new way to get information to farmers. Field specialist Lynn Gordon says iGrow radio is a daily, three-minute report being carried by a dozen radio stations. It's an offshoot of the iGrow website. Gordon tells KELO-TV that farmers are getting more of their information through technology including computers and cellphones, but they also still spend a lot of time in their pickup trucks and tractors with the radio on. He says iGrow radio topics will deal with soybean, corn, wheat and beef production. The Extension Service eventually will have podcasts and video podcasts on the website to go along with the radio broadcasts.

Man Accused Of Assaulting Wife, Law Officer

MITCHELL (AP) — A Mitchell man is accused of assaulting his wife and a corrections officer. Authorities allege that 38-year-old William Corcoran punched, choked and head-butted his wife on Dec. 10. They say he broke her phone as she tried to call 911, fled, then returned later that night, broke in through a window and hit her twice with a glass bottle. Law officers say they had to break down the door of the home to arrest Corcoran. At the jail, he allegedly tried unsuccessfully to spit on a corrections officer. *The Daily Republic* reports that Corcoran faces up to 19 years in prison if convicted on all of the charges against him.

Nebraska Sees Record Number Of Eagle Nests

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — State officials say Nebraska had a record of 90 active bald eagle nests during the 2011 breeding season. The *Lincoln Journal Star* says it's nearly double the previous record of 54 in 2007. The state's first successful modern nest was observed in 1991 in Douglas County. Joel Jorgensen of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission says the increase is "remarkable." Nest monitoring is done by the commission, which also depends on other agencies and volunteers. The bald eagle recovery is considered a modern conservation success story. It was listed as a federally and state endangered species in 1978. Populations declined primarily because of the use of DDT and other pesticides.

S.D., Colo. Eyed For Yellowstone Bison

BY MATTHEW BROWN
Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. — For the first time in decades, the federal government is considering moving bison captured leaving Yellowstone National Park to public lands in Colorado, South Dakota and elsewhere as part of efforts to curb periodic slaughters of the animals. However, Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer said Wednesday the animals belong to his state and he will block any attempt to move them. In a Tuesday letter obtained by The Associated Press, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar told Schweitzer his agency is looking at relocation sites including Badlands National Park on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and Great Sand Dunes National Park in Colorado. Salazar also mentioned Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, where a prior attempt to place Yellowstone bison collapsed two years ago. The proposal came as state and federal officials have been trying to come up with alternatives to the periodic slaughter of bison leaving the park in search of food. Cattle ranchers say those migrations raise the chance of livestock being infected by diseased bison. Many of Yellowstone's 3,700 bison have been exposed to the disease brucellosis, yet the animals remain prized for their pure genetics. The bison to be transferred have been tested and are considered disease-free. "I want to work with you to manage bison numbers and reduce disease prevalence in the Yellowstone herd," Salazar wrote to Schweitzer. "While the Department of Interior alone cannot resolve this issue, I am willing to look at options of moving Yellowstone bison onto other DOI properties." After receiving the letter, Schweitzer issued an order blocking any fish and wildlife shipments by the Interior Department in Montana. The governor wants the bison to go

to the National Bison Range near Moiese in western Montana. He said he was concerned in part that the Interior Department's past actions have allowed animal diseases such as brucellosis and chronic wasting disease to spread across the region. "These aren't Interior's bison to decide where they go. They belong to the state of Montana," Schweitzer said Wednesday. Wildlife officials said Wednesday the prohibition ordered by Schweitzer could effect federal trout hatcheries that produce more than a million fish annually. No other wildlife shipments are currently planned, although Yellowstone administrators have proposed shipping brucellosis-positive bison to slaughter this year if hunting outside the park does not keep the population from outgrowing the park. The prohibition comes after Interior officials earlier this month rebuffed Schweitzer's proposal for the bison range. They said having Yellowstone animals on the Montana range would stigmatize the bison already there and make it harder to eventually transfer the Yellowstone animals to other states that are worried about the spread of the disease. Salazar said in his letter that the transfer of bison to Moiese had not been ruled out, but an evaluation of such a move would not be completed during the upcoming winter season. A relocation of animals to the Great Sand Dunes could be done in partnership with a conservation group, The Nature Conservancy, that owns the Zapata Ranch adjacent to the park, Salazar said. Bison relocated to the Badlands would be managed in cooperation with the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Yellowstone biologists have predicted that more than 1,000 bison could exit the park this winter seeking food at lower elevations. Millions of bison once roamed North America. Most of those herds were wiped out by the late 1800s, and by 1902 only about two dozen of the animals remained in Yellowstone.

After the park's herd gained new protections and gradually rebounded, Yellowstone administrators sought to keep bison numbers in check by slaughtering the animals or shipping them elsewhere, said Keith Aune a bison biologist with the Wildlife Conservation Society. Those shipments continued into the 1960s, ending after the park adopted a policy of regulation in which bison numbers would be controlled by natural deaths. But the park's herds soon began spilling over its border, and thousands of those migrating animals have been captured and shipped to slaughter over the past decade to guard against livestock being infected by brucellosis. The disease can cause pregnant animals to miscarry. Ranches that suffer infections are subject to lengthy quarantines. Schweitzer has said he will allow the state to transfer 66 disease-free Yellowstone bison to eastern Montana's Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Indian reservations. Another 143 Yellowstone bison are being held at a ranch near Bozeman. Those are the animals that Salazar is suggesting could be sent to federal lands elsewhere. Before being put on the Turner ranch for temporary holding, the bison spent several years in a government-run quarantine near the park to ensure they were brucellosis-free. The quarantine compound is expected to be used beginning next year to study the effectiveness of chemical contraceptives on bison. Salazar said in his letter that he has asked the National Park Service to evaluate whether a new quarantine facility should be built. Aune said the relocation of disease-free bison captured from Yellowstone has potential to help the species recover in other parts of the country. Garrit Voggeser, director of tribal partnerships for the National Wildlife Federation, said that could take several years to arrange, and that his organization would not endorse specific proposals.

Crop Insurance Rates Skyrocket After Summer Floods

BY HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Midwestern farmers who saw their land swamped by summer flooding may be socked again with steep increases in their crop insurance premiums, the expensive result of the failure to fix broken levees before the winter snow and next spring's rains. The Missouri River rose to record levels this year after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began releasing massive amounts of water from reservoirs in Montana, Nebraska and the Dakotas that had been inundated with melting snow and heavy rains. Many levees in downstream states such as Iowa and Missouri were no match for weeks of sustained pressure and gave way. Homes and farms were damaged or ruined. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency said \$114 million in claims have been paid so far for flooding damage on 436,000 acres along the Missouri River downstream from the Gavins Point Dam on the Nebraska-South Dakota border. Record high water levels also created havoc along the lower Mississippi River from Missouri to Louisiana. In southeast Missouri, the corps used explosives to blow gaping holes in the Birds Point levee to let water out of the Mississippi River and save the tiny town of Cairo, Ill., on the river's eastern bank. The blast sent water cascading over Missouri farms. The deluge flooded about 130,000 acres behind the levee, including about 8,000 on which Ed Marshall, 55, of Charleston, grows corn, wheat and soybeans. He received \$1.5 million in federally-subsidized crop insurance, which covers part of farmers' losses from such things as drought, flooding, hail, wind, insects and plant disease. Then his premium skyrocketed. He recently paid about

\$100,000 to insure about 2,700 acres of wheat that he planted in the fall and hopes to harvest in the spring. The amount is nearly five times what he paid a year ago because the U.S. Department of Agriculture now considers his land high risk and he increased his coverage because of the risk. Marshall, like many farmers, feels like the government has left him high and dry. "You are going to blow my levee up and then you are going to turn around and take more money from me for insurance because I don't have a levee because you all blew it up," he said. "There is nothing right about that in my opinion." The higher premium is worth it, given that Marshall expects to earn \$1 million from the wheat. But the rise in insurance costs "is almost adding insult to injury to farmers who lost their crops this year," said Kathy Kunkel, the clerk in Holt County on the opposite side of the state, where the Missouri River flooded more than 120,000 acres and 32 levees were breached. Insurance is a regular cost of doing business, but "this is going to put some people out of business," she added. Officials with the USDA's Risk Management Agency began warning farmers of potential rate increases over the summer because they didn't want them to be shocked when the 2012 rates were announced last month, said Rebecca Davis, a spokeswoman for the agency.

more expensive to insure farmland behind damaged levees than those where repairs have been made. Some farmers, like Marshall, have already paid the higher rates for crops planted this fall. Others will pay unless repairs are made before crops like corn and soybeans are planted in the spring. Along with the Birds Point area, the higher rates could apply in 22 counties in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska and Tennessee. The corps has estimated it will cost more than \$2 billion to repair damage this year's flooding did to levees, dams and riverbanks. With a funding bill stalled in Congress, the corps has been focusing its limited money on fixing levees that protect communities and facilities such as water treatment plants. "We are not going to have them all fixed," said Jody Farhat, chief of the Missouri River Basin Water Management office. "The (levees) that we are working on because the funding is limited won't be restored to their pre-flood conditions. And there are many that we won't even have money to start the repairs." Farmers also must restore their soil to pre-flood conditions to get their insurance rates back down. Flooding often cuts mas-

sive ruts in the land, washes top soil away and leaves sand from the river bed, which isn't good for farming. The cleanup is costly. Marshall said he spent \$270,000 to clean ditches and clear 200 acres of land. He figures it will cost another \$300,000 to fix another 200 acres that were badly damaged. If the corps can't take care of the levee repairs, it should help farmers pay the higher insurance premiums, Missouri Farm Bureau President Blake Hurst said. "It's a mess," he said. "These folks have lost their homes. They've lost their grain bins, they've lost their implement sheds, they've lost a year's crop. They have a tremendous amount of damage to the land from both scouring and sand deposits. And now they are looking at an increase in insurance premiums. Something has got to be done." The levee at Birds Point was 62.5 feet high before the explosion. Generally levees must be restored to their pre-flooding condition, but in the case of Birds Point, farmers won't face big premium increases if the corps gets it back up to 55 feet before spring planting. Marshall said the rebuilding has been going slowly. "They had a plan to destroy it," he said, "but not a plan to fix."

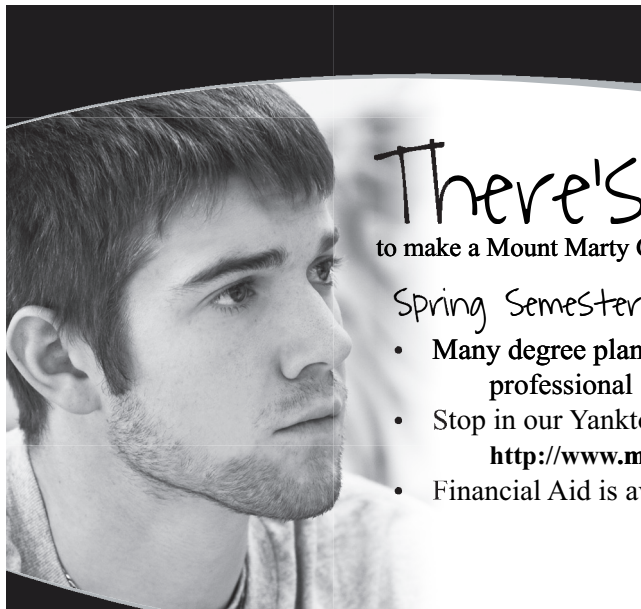
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