

### Flood-Damaged Homes Found Vandalized

FORT CALHOUN, Neb. (AP) — Some residents near Fort Calhoun whose homes were damaged by last summer's flooding along the Missouri River are returning to find their homes have been further damaged by vandals.

KETV reports Desoto Park Estate residents have been trying to salvage what's left of their homes but are feeling victimized all over again as they find their homes have been vandalized.

Cindy Eisheid, whose parents' house has been hit by vandals twice, says it feels like being kicked in the gut again.

James Busher says he could board up his house but then he couldn't get in.

Sheriff's deputies have spent a lot of time in the area recently and Washington County Sheriff Mike Robinson has spent several nights in the neighborhood hoping to catch vandals in the act.

### Man Gets Prison For Sexual Contact With Child

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A 58-year-old South Dakota man who pleaded guilty to sexual contact with a child has been sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Attorney General Marty Jackley says in a news release that Richard D. Ronke, Sioux Falls, was sentenced on two felony counts of sexual contact with a child under the age of 16. He was sentenced to 15 years on both counts with five years suspended on each count. Ronke will serve the time consecutively.

The Sioux Falls Police Department investigated the case.

### Custer Co. To Study Elk Population With Grant

RAPID CITY (AP) — Research into why the elk population is declining in Custer State Park is one of several projects funded by grants from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation this year.

The *Rapid City Journal* reports that the foundation provided \$80,309 in grants for work in Butte, Custer, Lawrence, Meade and Pennington counties.

In addition to researching the elk population, Custer county's money will go toward enhancing forage in the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve and helping with weed control in the Hell Canyon Ranger District.

Lawrence County's funding will go toward monitoring and repairing 46 "guzzlers" used by elk and other species for water, while the grant money for Pennington County will be used to sponsor interpretive displays at the Game, Fish & Parks Department Outdoor Campus West in Rapid City.

### Jackley Trying To Locate Victims Of Scam

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley is asking anyone in South Dakota who has done business with a fugitive recently captured in Sioux Falls to contact the state's Division of Consumer Protection.

The Sioux Falls Area Fugitive Task Force located 63-year-old Dennis Burton, of West Fargo, N.D., earlier this week. Burton is accused of promising buildings to customers, collecting a down payment and failing to deliver. He was wanted in South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa. Burton also goes by the name Dennis Walker.

The South Dakota Division of Consumer Protection can be reached at 605-773-4400 or 1-800-300-1986.

### Police: Neb. Man Didn't Return From Test Drive

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Police in Lincoln say they've arrested a man who took a car on a test drive and never returned.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that 23-year-old Daniel Moshier was going to buy a car from a woman on Craigslist on Dec. 24. Police say he told the woman he was going to take the car to go get money to pay her but never came back.

Moshier was arrested Thursday night after he was stopped for driving without headlights. He was charged with theft by deception.

Police say the car will be returned to the woman.

The case had not yet been entered in the state's online court system and no attorney information was immediately available.

## Harsh Winters, Habitat Loss Hurts Plains Hunting

BY DIRK LAMMERS  
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — Hunters in the northern Plains who've grown accustomed to bringing home three pheasants or a deer are finding the years of abundance may be over.

Three brutal winters and a steady loss of habitat have hurt reproduction and reduced the number of animals hunters have seen this season, wildlife and conservation experts say.

Randy White, who's been hunting South Dakota pheasants for a quarter of a century, said wild birds are out there but hunters are no longer reaching their three-bird-per-person limit within the first hour.

"I'm hunting with two very good dogs, and it's still tough," said White, who has spent some 30 days this season in fields with his golden retrievers, Annie and Roxy. "You just got to hunt hard and a lot longer."

A Christmas with little or no snow should help hens and roosters find food and survive so they can reproduce, said Randy Kreil, wildlife chief of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, but population gains will still be hampered by loss of habitat as land enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve

Program shifts back to farming.

The voluntary CRP program pays landowners not to farm their property. Since its creation in 1985, it has boosted populations of ducks, ring-necked pheasants, prairie chickens, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and other wildlife by providing areas where they can feed and reproduce, according to the USDA.

But the fees paid to landowners haven't kept pace with increases in crop prices, and many farmers are putting native prairie and even land once considered marginal for farming back into production. If property owners don't want to farm themselves, they can get more than \$100 per acre annually by renting their fields to those who do. The average CRP fee is just \$57 an acre.

About 31 million acres are enrolled in the CRP program, but contracts on 6.5 million of those acres are scheduled to expire by September. At its peak in 2007, the program protected nearly 36.8 million acres, said Dan James, spokesman for the USDA Farm Service Agency in Bismarck.

"We've warned people that the previous years' experiences with deer and pheasants could be considered the 'good ol' days' be-

cause it's going to change quickly," Kreil said. "We have a whole generation of hunters that doesn't have any idea what it's like."

Some hunters have already noticed the loss of habitat.

"They'll go out to places they've hunted pheasants or deer for the last 20 years and it's completely black dirt now," Kriel said. "It's all turned over."

In South Dakota, the pheasants-per-mile index used to assess the population dropped by 46 percent over the past year, after reaching historic highs from 2003 to 2010.

Joe Sonnenfeld, 27, who regularly hunts pheasants near Doland, S.D., said he and other outdoorsmen have to cover a lot more land to get their limit. But out-of-state hunters who fly in and out of Sioux Falls Regional Airport for guided or preserve hunts often leave happy because they're hunting on stocked land.

"If they're paying for their hunt, they're pretty much guaranteed their birds," said Sonnenfeld, assistant manager of the Enterprise rental car branch at the airport.

"They've been seeing them, but I think that's kind of a flawed representation of what the state bird numbers are."

## S.D. Authorities Warn Of Rapist Released From Prison

BY AMBER HUNT  
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — A convicted rapist who has refused sex offender treatment and could still be a threat was released Friday because rules in place when he was sentenced cut his prison time nearly in half, the South Dakota Department of Corrections said.

The department took the unusual step of publicizing the release of Daniel McQuillen, 57, because of concerns he may offend again.

"There's great concern when there's someone who was in (prison) for a sex offense and refuses treatment," corrections Spokesman Michael Winder said Friday.

Daniel McQuillen was sentenced to 55 years in prison in October 1982 for raping an 11-year-old Sioux Falls girl who'd been waiting on a corner for newspapers to arrive for her paper route. The parole system at the time of his sentencing gave inmates four months of credit for every year spent behind bars. That helped shave 26 years from his sentence.

He was released Friday morning from the state prison in Springfield.

Attempts by The Associated Press to reach an attorney for Mc-

Quillen weren't immediately successful.

Because the law considers McQuillen's sentence fulfilled, he won't be assigned a parole officer or be subject to any after-prison care. McQuillen waived his right to appear at his annual parole hearing starting in 2003, Winder said.

"He didn't want to be on parole supervision," Winder said.

McQuillen refused any sex offender treatment or assessment while in prison. An evaluation conducted before his imprisonment reported that he peeked through windows to watch his sisters undress when he was younger.

McQuillen told the chief of forensic services, who did the report, that he spotted the 11-year-old girl he assaulted after he finished his shift as a cook in a truck stop. He grabbed her, took her across the street and assaulted her, the report said.

Nearly two weeks later, he accosted a female student at Washington High School and threatened her with a knife. His assault was cut short when he couldn't undo her pants, the report said.

The aggravated assault charge for that case was dropped when he was convicted of the rape.

## Nebraska High Court Affirms Conviction In Ax Killing

BY JOSH FUNK  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The Nebraska Supreme Court has affirmed the murder conviction of a Lincoln man who bludgeoned his mother to death with an ax in a ruling released Friday.

Matthew Fox had argued he shouldn't have been declared competent to stand trial because he couldn't bear to discuss his case. The court said Fox's decision not to discuss his mother's death with his lawyers didn't mean he wasn't competent.

"The record shows that Fox has elected not to discuss or remember the events surrounding his mother's death because of their disturbing nature and his risk of decompensating," the court said.

Fox was sentenced to life in prison in December for first-degree murder in the death of his mother, Sherry Fox. Prosecutors say Matthew Fox, who was 19 years old at the time, hit his mother with an ax 14 times in the basement of their home on Oct. 25, 2008.

He was found incompetent to stand trial twice and spent more than a year in a state psychiatric hospital before the lower court

found him competent in 2010.

Prosecutors with the Nebraska Attorney General's office didn't immediately respond to a message Friday.

Fox's attorney, Jerry Soucie with the Nebraska Commission on Public Advocacy, also didn't immediately respond to a message Friday morning.

Soucie had argued in his appeal that Fox is insane and suffers from severe depression and schizoid personality disorder. Fox never disclosed his memory of the murder, Soucie wrote, adding that all his statements about the killing "demonstrated confusion and a lack of understanding regarding why he would have killed her."

Attempting to confront Fox with photos and blood splatter reports to refresh his memory posed a significant danger to Fox's mental health, Soucie said. So Fox decided not to attend much of his trial.

The court agreed with prosecutors who argued that Fox was capable of assisting in his defense if he chose to. Prosecutors said the fact that Fox told psychiatrists repeatedly that his mother's death was horrific shows that he remembered the event.

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