

Nebraska

# ‘Buy Nebraska’ Bill To Be Offered

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Dewayne Docken figured his data entry company had a good shot at a contract offered last year by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

But Docken, president of Priority Data, was left fuming when the south Omaha-based company lost the contract to an out-of-state business that underbid him by less than \$20.

“To me, it seemed ludicrous,” Docken said. “It was extremely frustrating. We have Nebraska residents working for us, paying state income taxes. And lo and behold, the project goes out of state.”

Nebraska lawmakers are expected to debate the issue next year when Omaha Sen. Heath Mello introduces a bill he’s drafted that is similar to “Buy America” legislation he proposed in the 2012 session. Mello said the proposal seeks to keep jobs in the state.

The Legislature’s Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee will hold hearings on Friday to examine the issue and get a sense of how often state agencies award work to out-of-state companies.

Mello said he called for the hearings because he wants to know the percentage of state contracts that go to Nebraska-based businesses, as well as the amount of goods and services bought by agencies that are produced in-state. He thinks the state isn’t following cur-

rent preference laws that are designed to protect Nebraska-based businesses from unfair competition.

“We’re trying to keep as many state dollars here as possible, and recycle them back through Nebraska’s economy,” he said.

Mello said Nebraska awards \$2 billion in contracts a year for goods and services, but it’s unclear how much comes from in-state sources.

Current state law gives preference to “resident bidder” companies that are registered with the Secretary of State’s office to do business in Nebraska, even if their operations are based elsewhere.

Nebraska gives preference to a “resident bidder” company only if two conditions apply: It’s vying for a state contract against a company that’s not registered in Nebraska, and it’s disadvantaged by the bidding laws on the home turf of the out-of-state business.

Priority Data was founded in Omaha in 1979. The data-entry firm takes customer or donor information supplied by businesses, charities and governments, and converts it into electronic spreadsheets that can be used more easily.

A handful of states give preference to local companies, and Docken said he sees it when Priority Data vies for government work those states.

Nebraska saves taxpayer money by awarding contracts to the lowest responsible bidder, but Docken argued that Nebraska-based companies contribute more directly to the state’s

economy and tax base.

Mello’s “Buy American” bill introduced in the last legislative session would have mandated that state contracts for public works projects contain a provision requiring American-made goods. The bill, which died in committee in April, included an exception if American-made goods weren’t available in sufficient quantities or if requiring them would increase a project’s cost by more than 10 percent.

The Department of Administrative Services, which handles state contracts, opposed the “Buy American” bill on grounds that it could limit competition and increase the cost for state taxpayers. Shrinking the market could also lead to inferior products and services, said Bo Botelho, the agency’s general counsel.

“Those states could say, ‘Well, Nebraska gives preference to their folks, so we’re going to give it to our folks,’” Botelho said. “It could impede the ability of Nebraska companies to do business outside of Nebraska.”

Botelho said his department does not track the amount of goods and services produced in Nebraska compared with other states, because the law doesn’t require it.

The hearing on Friday will also examine a government spending website maintained by the Nebraska State Treasurer’s office. Mello said the site could be more detailed to give bidders a better sense of what the state has spent on past contracts.

# S.D. Ranchers Clash Over Proposed Uranium Mine

EDGEMONT (AP) — Susan Henderson and Mark Hollenbeck share a powerful love for this rugged ranch country just off the southern edge of the Black Hills.

But the two ranchers differ sharply on how the land, and their livelihoods, might be affected by a proposed uranium mine about 13 miles northwest of town.

The proposal would use a water-based solution and hundreds of injection-recovery wells to extract uranium from ore formations hundreds of feet under

the ground, a process that avoids the surface damage of strip mining but raises complicated questions about radioactivity and potential water degradation underground.

Henderson fears the so-called Dewey Burdock Project — named for two abandoned towns nearby — by the Canadian corporation Powertech Uranium will most likely deplete the underground aquifer system that supplies her 8,000-acre ranch with clean water.

At worst, she fears, it could contaminate that precious water

resource and ruin her contract cattle-grazing business for good.

“Without water, this ranch is dead,” Henderson said during a recent pickup truck tour of her sprawling ranch southeast of Edgemont. “And if Powertech gets its way, they’re going to pull down that aquifer. And I’ll be out of business.”

But Hollenbeck argues that the uranium removal plan posed by the Canadian corporation’s American arm will bring up to 85 jobs over the 20-year life of the project and add more financial vi-

talidity to an arid landscape that struggles economically.

There could be 150 jobs during construction, he said.

And Hollenbeck believes that can all be done without harming the land that he, too, holds so dear.

“This is where my kids swim,” he said, standing along the Cheyenne River on property he owns a few miles down from one of the proposed mining sites. “Do you think I’m going to do something to ruin the place where my kids will grow up?”

## OBITUARIES

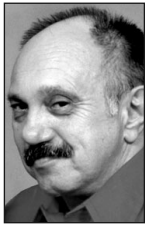
### Warren Brenner

Warren F. Brenner, age 70, of Yankton, South Dakota, died Thursday, November 29, 2012 at the VA Medical Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Funeral services will be 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 4, 2012, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Yankton, South Dakota with Reverend David Wildermuth officiating. Burial will be in the Yankton City Cemetery in Yankton with military honors provided by the Ernest-Bowyer VFW Post No. 791 and the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Visitation is from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Monday, December 3, 2012, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton with the family present from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Pallbearers are Culley VanLaecken, Jarrett Brenner, Travis



Brenner

Shannon, Laurisa, and Lindsay; grandson, DJ; and all of his special friends who meant so much to him.

Warren F. Brenner was born June 1, 1942, in Parkston, South Dakota to John and Olga (Johnson) Brenner. He grew up on the farm in the Armour/Delmont area and attended school in Armour, South Dakota. He enlisted in the United States Navy and served his country during the Vietnam War. After his discharge

from the Navy he returned to the farm and met Delores Williams who he later married on November 17, 1964 in Denver, Colorado. They moved to Yankton in 1978, where Warren worked various jobs including working as a nurse’s aide at the Human Services Center in Yankton, which he continued until his retirement.

Warren was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Yankton. Warren also enjoyed his almost daily trips to Yesterdays Café for breakfast, visiting with his friends and especially loved spending time with his grandchildren, great grandchildren and dogs.

Survivors include his four children: Warren (Laurie) Brenner of Yankton; Valetta Rechnagel of Yankton, Kathy (Mike) VanLaecken of Peoria, IL, and

Duane Baas of Springfield, SD; 12 grandchildren; several great grandchildren; one sister, Edna Hendrickson of Sioux Falls, SD; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Delores on January 31, 1998; one brother; and three sister.

To post an online sympathy message visit [wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://wintzrayfuneralhome.com).

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
December 3, 2012

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FUNERAL HOME  
and Cremation Service, Inc.  
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[www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com)

### Melvin Guthmiller

Melvin Guthmiller, 86, of Yankton died Friday, Nov. 30, 2012, at Avera Yankton Care Center.

Funeral services are at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home, Yankton, with the Rev. Dan Freng officiating. Burial will be in the Rosehill Cemetery, Scotland, with military honors provided by the Scotland VFW Post No. 2966 and Scotland American Legion Post No. 155.

Visitation is one hour prior to the funeral service at the funeral home.

To send an online sympathy card, visit [www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com).

### Melvin Schmidt

Melvin L. Schmidt, 87, of Yankton died early Sunday, Dec. 2, 2012, at the Avera Yankton Care Center, Yankton.

Mass of Christian Burial is at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, at Holy Family Parish, St. Helena, Neb., with the Rev. Eric Olson officiating. Burial will be in the parish cemetery with Military Graveside Rites by the Wynot American Legion Post No. 31.

Visitations begin at 5 p.m. Tuesday at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yank-

ton, with a Wake service at 7 p.m. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

### Joyce Dennison

VERMILLION — Joyce Ann Steckelberg Dennison, 89, of Vermillion died Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012, at her home in Vermillion surrounded by her family.

Memorial services are at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, with a visitation to begin at 6 p.m., at Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion.

**Blast From The Past**  
**Breakfast Special \$3.95**  
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### John Steinmetz

John Michael Steinmetz, 39, of Howard formerly of Vermillion, died suddenly as a result of a car accident on Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012.

Memorial service are at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4, at Kober Fu-

neral Home in Vermillion. Burial of ashes will be at a later date. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service on Tuesday at the funeral home.

Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion, is in charge of arrangements.

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**Laddie Cimpl**  
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RSVPs are not required, but please call us at 665-3644 if you have any questions.

### Forest Fire Burning In The Black Hills

RAPID CITY (AP) — The U.S. Forest Service says a 21-acre forest fire is burning near Victoria Lake in South Dakota’s Black Hills.

Forest Service spokesman Scott Jacobson says the fire was spotted about 4 a.m. Sunday, but was about 40 percent contained by noon.

Jacobson told the *Rapid City Journal* that the fire is producing a lot of smoke.

He says volunteer fire departments and the South Dakota Wildland Fire Suppression Division are helping the Forest Service fight the fire. Jacobson says the cause of the fire is unknown.

### Man Taken To Hospital After Hunting Accident

ABERDEEN (AP) — A man was taken to the emergency room at an Aberdeen hospital after a hunting accident in South Dakota’s Spink County.

Nick Cochran, a game warden with the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department, says the accident happened Saturday afternoon during a pheasant hunt.

Cochran tells the *Aberdeen American News* that the incident is being investigated by the Brown County Sheriff’s Office because a deputy was close to the scene.

### Firefighters Torch Neb. Mansion For Training

GRETNA, Neb. (AP) — Firefighters burned down a decaying mansion near Gretna room by room on Sunday for training.

The 14,000-square-foot mansion that businessman and former Buffalo Bills player Rod Kush built in 1997 slid into disrepair over several years before the planned fire.

The massive home featuring 10 bathrooms, five bedrooms, sauna and a half basketball court was once worth roughly \$2.5 million.

Kush sold it for \$1.6 million in 2008 after closing most of his furniture stores. That buyer donated the home to Catholic Charities, but the group failed to open a planned youth treatment center.

Sarpy County Assessor Dan Pittman declared the home worthless in 2011 because of mold issues and vandalism. At that time, the property was valued at \$539,916.

Pittman said it would cost more than the home was worth to clean up the mold now.

The mansion and surrounding 35 acres, which once held a three-hole golf course, sold two years ago to an Elkhorn developer for \$612,000.

The developer needed to clear the mold-covered mansion for a project on the land, so firefighters received a special training experience.

The Gretna fire department began burning down the house around 7:30 a.m. The department burned only one room at a time, so firefighters could see how different kinds of accelerants behave in a blaze.

Several other area fire departments also participated. The training exercise at the house ended Sunday afternoon.

### Omaha Police Investigate 2 Bodies Found

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Omaha police are investigating the deaths of two people after finding their bodies inside a business.

Police released few details about the deaths Sunday as they tried to determine what happened.

Officer Michael Pecha says police were called to the northeast Omaha business at 4010 Grant Street around 2:30 p.m. Sunday. The responding officers found two bodies inside.

Police have not said how the two people died nor released their gender.

### Iowa Child Is Diagnosed With Swine Flu

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — Cedar County health officials are stepping up flu surveillance since a child there was diagnosed with a flu virus normally found in pigs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the H3N2v influenza A strain in the child, KCRG-TV in Cedar Rapids reported.

State epidemiologist Dr. Patricia Quinlisk said the child, who has since recovered, had not been in contact with swine, one of the modes of transmission.

Health professionals in and around Cedar County are being asked to take more specimens for testing from people who might have the flu, Quinlisk said.

Three Iowa children had the same strain in November 2011, Quinlisk said. All recovered.

Nationally, 320 cases of the flu strain have been reported in the United States since July 2011, according to the CDC. One person has died from the strain and 16 have been hospitalized this year. Quinlisk said none of those were in Iowa.

The virus has mostly been associated with prolonged exposure to swine exhibits at county fairs, but human-to-human spread of the virus has been recorded in Iowa and West Virginia, according to the CDC. People do not get swine flu by eating pork.

Symptoms and severity of the H3N2v virus are similar to seasonal flu, with fever and breathing difficulties, cough and runny nose, and sometimes other symptoms, including body aches, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

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