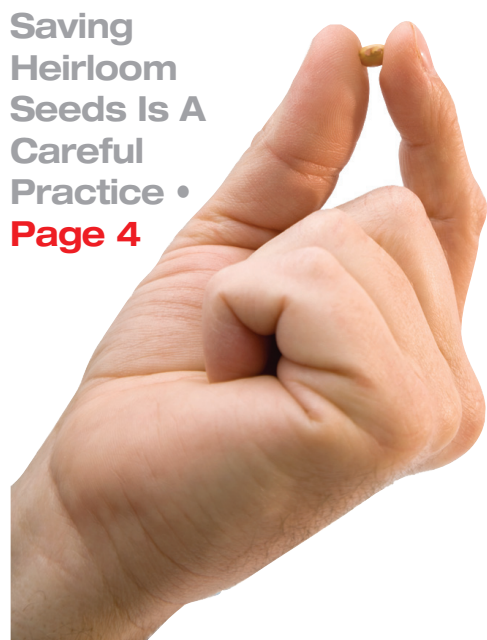




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Corps Says No To River Rises

Southern States Thwarted In Effort To Raise Missouri River Discharges

BY JIM SUHR AND JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The Army Corps of Engineers has turned back requests by federal lawmakers and the barge industry to release more of the Missouri River it is withholding...

Missouri River flows into the Mississippi — something the politicians urgently had sought.

Darcy, a top Army Corps official, noted this week's revised National Weather Service forecast, which showed the Mississippi's level wasn't falling as rapidly as expected.

Darcy also reinforced what the corps has been insisting for

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Gertsema To Resign From YSD

Longtime Superintendent Leaving Post Next Summer After 22 Years

BY DEREK BARTOS derek.bartos@yankton.net

Yankton School District Superintendent Joe Gertsema said Friday he will be resigning from that position effective June 30, 2013.

His letter of resignation will be presented to the Yankton School Board for its acceptance at the board's regular monthly meeting Monday.

Gertsema, who has served as YSD superintendent for the past 22 years, said he has been contemplating this decision for the past year, and believes now is the best time to leave the position.

"Few superintendents stay in a school district that long, and I'm really grateful for that opportunity," he said. "I just really felt that I'm at a point in my life that, if I want to do something different, now is the time."

Gertsema said his October incident, in which he was charged in Vermillion with driving under the influence, was not the reason for his resignation, and it did not play into his decision.

"That's not a part of it," he said. "This was a decision I'm making because I just felt now was the time for a new challenge. That's really all it is."

Since his arrival in 1990, Gertsema has overseen numerous improvements to the school district. These include a comprehensive building program, additions to every school



Gertsema

building in Yankton, the YHS/Summit Activities Center and the new bus garage and administrative facility. The district has also improved its technology infrastructure to allow for enhanced teaching and learning activities.

Of all those accomplishments, Gertsema said he is most proud of the district's student achievement level.

"That is what truly drives me as a superintendent because, without the students, none of this would be necessary," he said. "The students in Yankton are succeeding very well, and a big part of that is the hard work and loyalty of the staff, and the tradition that we have here in our school district. I'm very proud of that."

Gertsema said he hopes that achievement level does not suffer due to the lack of funds currently available to the school district, pointing to the 8.6 percent decrease in K-12 funding approved by the state Legislature in 2011.

"I hope that the state can come up with a better funding formula for the schools," he said. "Right now, we're still over \$300 per pupil below where we were before these budget cuts, and it's truly having an impact on the way

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HIGHWAY MAN



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Brian Gustad will soon take over as the Yankton County highway superintendent. He replaces Alan Sorensen, who is retiring this month after 19 years in the position.

Gustad Ready For Road Work

New Yankton Co. Highway Superintendent Begins Work Dec. 17

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Having spent most of his life driving the roads of Yankton County, Brian Gustad looks forward to the opportunity to help improve them.

Gustad, 27, will begin his tenure as the Yankton County highway superintendent Dec. 17. He takes over for Alan Sorensen, who is retiring after 19 years in the position.

Currently, Gustad is a survey crew chief at Eisenbraun and Associates and does drafting and road inspections.

"I do a lot of stuff related to my new job," he said. "That's what brought me to want to apply for the highway superintendent position."

Gustad grew up in the Volin area doing farm work for his dad and went to high school in Irene. Prior to working for Eisenbraun, he was employed by the South Dakota Department of Transportation out of its Yankton office.

"The main reason I wanted to be the highway superintendent is, I drive the roads of Yankton County and always think about what I would do differently," Gustad said. "Having worked for the DOT, there are a lot of things that I see could be done differently."

Gustad was among 11 applicants for the position. Initially, the Yankton County Commission offered it to another candidate. When he declined, the job was offered to Gustad.

"I wasn't the first offer, and I was really disappointed by that," he admitted. "But I'm glad I got the chance to do this, because I feel like I can make a difference. I'm really thankful for the opportunity."

Bruce Jensen, chairman of the County Commission, said

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Avon Man Dies In Minn. Fire

ST. CHARLES, Minn. (AP) — Authorities say the man who died in a fire at a St. Charles motel was from South Dakota.

Police say 47-year-old Vincent Edward Wright, of Avon and formerly of Wagner, had checked into the Downtown Motel earlier Thursday and was the only one registered to the room. Three other motel guests escaped unharmed when fire broke out about 11 p.m.

St. Charles Fire Chief Lyle Peterson says flames were "through the roof and out the windows" when firefighters arrived. Fire crews left the scene about 3:30 a.m. Friday.

Winona Daily News says firefighters were called back about an hour later when the fire reignited. Peterson says five of the motel's 10 rooms were severely damaged or destroyed. The State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating.

Blessed Event: Creighton Hospital Expansion Open

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

CREIGHTON, Neb. — For the doctors and patients of Avera Creighton Hospital, the new surgical wing has been a blessing.

And on Friday, the Rev. Jeff Lorig of St. Ludger's Catholic Church offered a special blessing for the nearly \$1 million project.

Lorig referred to the Christian foundation for the project, based on Jesus' healing ministry.

"This hospital isn't just about serving the body but also the moral and spiritual as well," he said.

The hospital held the blessing ceremony in conjunction with the open house for the facility, which was completed in October. Avera Creighton, the only hospital in Knox County, exerts an economic impact of \$13 million annually and serves as the county's largest employer with more than 140 full- and part-time staff members, according to hospital officials.

"This new surgical area was put to immediate use, and we are blessed to be busy with the space so far," said hospital CEO Mark Schulte.

The area now occupied by the surgery department was included in the 2005 addition to the hospital as shell space. The area was used for storage until construction began last April on the new state-of-the-art surgical wing.

Completion of the surgery area, along with a conversion to electronic medical records, were part of the purchase agreement when Avera Sacred Heart Hospital (ASHH) of Yankton bought the medical complex from the City of Creighton in 2011, Schulte said.

"The new wing replaced the old operating rooms that were part of the 1954 construction," he said. "The old surgery room did its purpose. There are many stories from the past, and there will be many more as we move forward to serve the Creighton community,

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RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

The Avera Creighton Hospital, which serves as part of the Creighton, Neb., medical complex, has received a major boost with a nearly \$1 million conversion of a storage shell into a surgical center. Hospital officials hosted a blessing ceremony and open house Friday.

Despite Snow, Yankton Co. Burn Ban Still In Effect

From P&D Staff Reports

The Yankton County burn ban remains in effect despite Friday's snowfall, according to a local fire official.

Deputy Fire Chief Larry Nickles said his phone began ringing Friday with requests to burn after it began snowing. Nothing has changed, he said.

Under an amendment to the ban in November, limited burning has been allowed.

A property owner must first get permission to burn from the local fire chief or other designated person, who in turn will contact the county dispatch center to inform authorities of the burn.

The ordinance restricts burning to daylight hours, and the fire must be attended.