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YANKTON DAILY

# PRESS & DAKOTAN



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72-66

VOLUME 138 NUMBER 195

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | 18 PAGES | www.yankton.net

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# A Historic Designation



The legendary "House of Gurney," located at Second and Capital in Yankton, was for decades a center for business and for life in the Yankton community. (This archive photo, from the Bob Karolevitz book "Yankton: The Way it Was!", is believed to have been taken in the 1930s. The Gurney building was added last week to the National Register of Historic Places, according to the South Dakota State Historical Society. (P&D archive photo)

## Gurney District Named To The National Register Of Historic Places

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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New business opportunities will emerge with a recent national designation for the House of Gurney Historic District, according to two Yankton officials.

The Gurney district, located at the intersection of Capital and Second streets in Yankton, is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, according to the South Dakota State Historical Society.

The National Register is the official federal list of properties identified as important in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture.

The newly-designated district in Yankton includes the main Gurney office and warehouse buildings, the Excelsior Mill buildings and the WNAX Fair Price station.

"This (designation) opens up the opportunity for a tax moratorium and tax credits. It also adds another economic development opportunity," said Paul Lowrie, a managing member of the Gurney Redevelopment Group.

Lowrie co-owns Gurney Landing, which includes both residential and commercial space. The newly-acquired economic incentives provide a boost for the historic district, he said.

"We already had plans for the district, and now we have this tax moratorium and tax credit," he said. Lowrie lauded the assistance of state officials,



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

The Gurney building is now known as Gurney Landing and is a business/residential development. The newly-designated House of Gurney District includes the main Gurney office and warehouse buildings, the Excelsior Mill buildings and the WNAX Fair Price station.

particularly Liz Aimlie with the state historic preservation office, in making the national designation a reality.

Aimlie's office, part of the State Historical Society, works in conjunction with the National Park Service. The NPS oversees the National Register program.

"Rich Jensen of Dakota Preservation in Sioux Falls also worked as a consultant on this project and played an important role," Lowrie said.

The Gurney District's placement on the national register gives the property, and Yankton in general, important nationwide recognition, said Crystal Nelson, director of the Dakota Territorial Museum in Yankton.

"It's important (to get the designation) because it's one of our most noticed historic locations," she said. "Amazing things happened on that corner. It's nice to finally acknowledge it."

The Gurney District listing continues Yankton's recognition as a historic city, Nelson said.

"It's always exciting to see another district be nominated and get the award in Yankton," she said. "There are so many historical locations that are still definitely in good shape. It's well worth the preservation, time and energy for being on the registry."

The designation helps preserve well-constructed buildings and their history, Nelson said.

"Buildings aren't built the way they used to be. This (registry listing) helps ensure (the property's) use and highlights aspects that we sometimes forget," she said.

"We as a community get to enjoy it, as more people embrace historic buildings and homes. But it also

GURNEY | PAGE 17

## Community Helps Food Pantry Meet Holiday Need

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
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Thanks to the response of the community, the Yankton County Contact Center Food Pantry should have plenty of supplies to get through the holidays.

"We're doing pretty good right now," said Kelli Stange, coordinator of the food pantry. "We were low, but donations have been coming in through churches and schools and other sources."

However, she said the challenge of keeping the shelves stocked will probably return in the new year without assistance.

"Our numbers are going up, and we've been having to buy quite a bit," Stange stated. "The need is noticeably higher this year. We are seeing new faces."

The Contact Center is gearing up to distribute its Holiday Food and Fruit Baskets to low-income families and individuals. It will provide about 350 baskets this year, which Stange said is comparable to last year.

Additionally, approximately 125 fruit baskets will be distributed to elderly individuals who are unable to get out of their homes. That is about 25 more than last year, according to Stange.

"We are thankful for those who have helped us with the baskets or provided other assistance to the food pantry," she said.

Even though many needs have been met, Stange said donations of hamburger helpers or other types of helpers, fruits, vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, juices and cereals could be used.

Also in short supply are personal products like soap, shampoo and toothpaste.

Donations may be sent to: Contact Center Food Pantry, 321 W. Third Street, Suite B02, Yankton, S.D. 57078. Donations can also be delivered directly to the Contact Center, which is located in the Yankton County Government Building at 321 W. Third Street.

Through the end of December, the Press & Dakotan is conducting a Contact Center food drive. Contributors can receive a discount on classified advertising for making a donation. For more information, contact Tera at 665-7811.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage

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Cookies, Casseroles & Christmas

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### HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Dec. 13  
12 shopping days to Christmas

## Extension Office Offers Area Ranchers A Drought Fact Check

BY LINDA WUEBBEN  
P&D Correspondent

"Ranchers received a rude reminder of what challenges face them on the range with this year's last drought," said Scott Cotton, UNL Extension Educator of Dawes County in western Nebraska, at the recent Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska (ICON) conference.

Cotton presented the reality out there in ranch country with some hard facts. The size of cow herds have been drastically reduced, anywhere from 25 to 60 percent. He estimated high buy-back prices for livestock will continue to rule the market until 2017. Hay prices are up 100 to 120 percent, when it can be found, and pasture rent is projected to be up 10 to 30 percent in 2013. Tax rates will be hostile in 2013 and ranchers should be including their accountant when talking about future business decisions. Also, due to the changes in the tax structure next year, many landownership changes are pending. High fixed costs are also projected for 2013.

Scientific facts paint a grim picture for future months. Cotton said it is estimated only 28 to 64 percent of normal forage production was possible this past harvest

season in central and western Nebraska. Grass nutrient values dropped 5 to 14 percent in Pine Ridge and the Sandhills. Value also dropped in most emergency CRP acres. The water tables in the Sandhills dropped 10 to 20 inches. But one of the hardest facts to accept is there are no alternative feeding sites. There is nothing left for grazing this winter into spring.

"We in Extension believe it is important to have an informed opinion and see a need to develop drought management plans," said Cotton.

Back in the 1930s, more than 60 percent of ranchers went out of business. This past year was as severe or worse than 1934 and much depends on what happens next year. Historically, some Nebraska counties experience drought two of every 10 years. Grazers are affected often by less severe levels of drought one of every four years.

"This past year of drought is a landscape change and we have lived through it," said Cotton. "And remember this will probably occur again within the next five years."

FACTS | PAGE 7

## RACING THE FREEZE



PHOTO: DAVE TUNGE/DAKOTA AERIALS

The harvest is long gone and winter is looming, but that doesn't mean that area farmland is bereft of activity. Dave Tunge of Dakota Aerials took this photo late last week of some tiling projects being conducted on area grounds. He said he has been seeing a lot of tiling activity in the region lately as farmers race to have the work done before the ground freezes. Daytime temperatures are expected to be in the low 30s for the next five days, but there is a chance for freezing precipitation Friday and Saturday. For forecast details, see page 2.