



Snow Expected

9 a.m.: 26 | 3 p.m.: 28 | DETAILS: PAGE 2

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A SIGN OF GOODWILL



Yankton High School students Lindsay Larson (left), Rylee Smith (center) and Whitlee Larson (right) sign their names to the banner they will eventually send to Sandy Hook Elementary School. Students have also been collecting money to send to the school, along with a card, to help the families affected by the shooting this weekend.

EMILY NIEBRUGGE/P&D

YHS Project Aims To Help Sandy Hook School Heal

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE news@yankton.net

When principal Wayne Kindle asked Yankton High School students to take part in a project to help the families affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, they responded with an automatic "yes."

Seniors Brianna Newman and Kayla Barger made a banner for students to sign that will be sent to the Connecticut school. They said the project has been something other students want to take part in.

"I have brothers and sisters in elementary school, and I know if that would have happened to my family, I can't imagine what we would be feeling," Newman said. "Knowing we were helping somebody was just a really great feeling."

"(Monday) when we were making the banner, classes were already coming out and signing it before we were even done. We know everyone has played a big part in it."

For Barger, it was difficult to hear about because her mom is a kindergarten teacher.

"Their town wasn't a bigger city," she said. "Everything that happened to them could happen anywhere."

You just have to be ready for anything. It felt really good to put my name on the banner because I know they're going through a really rough time and the families would really appreciate our school doing this for them."

Kindle said he knew he wanted to do something for the families affected by the school shooting, and felt this was a good way for YHS students to give back and express themselves.

"You don't know what to do because we're so far away," he said. "We're really connected, though, because we are a school and that's where everything happened. It's a really easy way for kids to do something for somebody else."

Students have the opportunity to sign their name on the banner, or even write a message. Kindle said no matter how much each student writes, it's a chance to do good.

"Writing a message, or writing your name, provides an opportunity for you to express yourself," he said.

"There were a lot of thoughts going up there among

YHS | PAGE 10

Yankton Co. Must Cover Tax Shortfall

Audit Finds Auditor's Office Failed To Levy \$224,000 In Property Taxes

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

An error in collecting property taxes means Yankton County will have to fork over almost \$224,000 to various tax entities for revenues they have not received.

According to the findings of a legislative audit presented to the Yankton County Commission Tuesday, the county auditor's office made numerous errors in levying property taxes for 2011 that were payable in 2012.

"Internal controls over the property tax assessment and collection process were inadequate, resulting in diminished assurance that property taxes were properly levied, collected or remitted to the taxing entities," stated Jeff Schaefer of the South Dakota Department of Legislative Audit.

Auditor Paula Jones is a regular presence at commission meetings but was not present Tuesday. Commission Chairman Bruce Jensen said he had spoken with Jones earlier in the day and was surprised when she did not attend.

The report found that the auditor's office:

- incorrectly used a School General Ag Levy of 2.380 rather than 2.388 for all of the affected tax districts;
- incorrectly used a Yankton County Secondary Road General Levy of .776 rather than .781 for all unorganized tax districts;
- incorrectly omitted the levies for the Yankton County Debt Service and Yankton County Opt Out from several tax districts;
- incorrectly omitted the levy for the James River Water Development District from several tax districts;



Jones

• incorrectly omitted, or in some instances doubled, the various levies for the Yankton School District (General, Bond Redemption, Capital Outlay, Pension and Special Education) in several tax districts; and

• incorrectly omitted or included the levy for the Yankton Rural Fire District in several tax districts.

The inaccuracies affected 5,948 individual tax parcels within the county and resulted in property tax underpayments to the following taxing entities:

- Yankton School District — \$200,485.16;
- Irene/Wakonda School District — \$2,225.24;
- Gayville/Volin School District — \$587.12;
- James River Water Development District — \$6,934.61;
- Yankton Rural Fire District — \$1,584.33;
- Yankton County Secondary Road — \$1,719.38; and
- Yankton County Secondary Road Opt Out — \$10,260.39.

The total amount of uncollected taxes came to \$223,796.23.

The commission decided its only option was to dig into its contingency fund to pay the entities the tax revenues owed. The county cannot go back and collect the taxes it failed to levy.

The audit recommended "that the county strengthen internal controls over the property tax de-

COUNTY | PAGE 10

Yankton To Lift Fire Ban

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Almost exactly five months after enacting a burn ban, the Yankton County Commission decided Tuesday to rescind it.

The burn ban was approved July 17.

Yankton County Emergency Management Director Paul Scherschligt told commissioners that local fire chiefs had indicated it is time to lift the burn ban.

"All of the chiefs ... are in favor at this time of taking it off," he said.

In accordance with Ordinance 17, people planning to do a controlled burn must still contact the county dispatch to notify authorities of their intentions.

Scherchligt added that work will be done on the language of the burn ban resolution to clarify issues for when

BAN | PAGE 10

SPORTS



Yankton Splits Home Triangular • 7

INSIDE TODAY



American Profile

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Dec. 19 6 shopping days to Christmas

Wagner Student: Hope A Key Ingredient To Student Success

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

WAGNER — Even with all the gridlock in Washington, Sage Zephier got a standing ovation for his message.

He's no politician or lobbyist. He won't even graduate from Wagner High School until next spring.

But as a Yankton Sioux tribal member, he brought a message of hope amidst the often challenging conditions on American Indian reservations.

Zephier delivered the student ad-

OUR TOWNS

Charles Mix County

dress for the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) National Leadership Awards Luncheon in Washington. The school-to-career program includes nearly 900 chapters in 32 states.

Zephier was chosen as speaker from more than 43,000 JAG students nationwide. He addressed nearly 1,000 people at the luncheon, part of the JAG National Student Leadership Academy.

"I wanted to get the point across that it helps a lot if you have one person along the way who guides you," he said. "In order for kids to succeed, you need somebody to give them help or some sense of hope."

He didn't know what to expect from the audience. "When I got a standing ovation (at the luncheon), I was blown away by it," he said.

Zephier shared his own journey from despair to a better place, which has given him a desire to succeed. He

HOPE | PAGE 10



COURTESY PHOTO

Wagner High School students Zane Zephier (left) and Laurel Gunhammer (right) present an American Indian star quilt to Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) national president Ken Smith in Washington, D.C. Wagner and Andes Central students were attending the national JAG conference.

SIGNS OF A 'SILENT NIGHT'

Pre-kindergartners from Sacred Heart Elementary School insert hand gestures into their performance during the school's Christmas concert Tuesday night at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre. Students from Pre-K through grade 5 performed several seasonal songs during the program titled "Listen to the Silent Night." To see or purchase images from this event, visit spotted.yankton.net. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)



NSP Trooper Hurt, Suspect Shot Near Brunswick, Neb.

From P&D Staff Reports

BRUNSWICK, Neb. — A Nebraska State Patrol trooper was injured and a male suspect was shot and wounded after a disturbance in Pierce and Antelope counties of northeast Nebraska.

NSP spokeswoman Deb Collins provided information on the incident early Tuesday afternoon. The suspect was identified as Aaron D. White, 38, Plainview.

Just before 11 a.m. Tuesday, the Nebraska State Patrol received a request for assistance from the Pierce County sheriff's

Office for a man who was creating a disturbance after being turned away from the Zion Lutheran School in Plainview, Neb. The man had been attempting to remove his children from the facility.

White, who was driving a semi-trailer truck, left the school and drove to a convenience store in Plainview, where he threatened harm to himself and others.

He then drove to his farm north and east of Brunswick, Neb., where he set fire to the

NSP | PAGE 2

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REGION 2 | OBITUARIES 3 | WORLD 3 | VIEWS 4 | LIFE 5 | MIDWEST 5 | SPORTS 7-8 | CLASSIFIEDS 9-10

TOMORROW: Local Teacher Retiring After 34 Years With YSD

YANKTON RECYCLING THIS WEEK: SOUTH OF 15TH STREET