

Protest Of Whiteclay Beer Sales Planned

WHITECLAY, Neb. (AP) — Another protest over alcohol sales in the Nebraska town of Whiteclay is planned for New Year's Eve.

Two Native American groups said Sunday that they will try to prevent alcohol sold in Nebraska from reaching the Pine Ridge reservation where alcohol is banned.

The Oglala Lakota Women and Deep Green Resistance groups say they will set up a blockade on the reservation's southern border starting at 9 p.m. Monday.

Alcohol sales in the town of Whiteclay have long been a concern for the Oglala Sioux Tribe because alcoholism and poverty are rampant on the reservation. The town of roughly a dozen people sold the equivalent of 4.3 million 12-ounce cans of beer last year.

Man Hospitalized After Running Into Car

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — An Omaha man is recovering after running into a moving car with enough force to break a window.

Omaha police say 28-year-old Manuel Flores ran into the side of a Mercury Cougar in southeast Omaha on Sunday afternoon.

Flores, who sustained a cut above the eye, told officers that he had been drinking beforehand.

Police say the 20-year-old driver of the car wasn't hurt and wasn't ticketed.

SD Hunters Kill 2 Mountain Lions Saturday

RAPID CITY (AP) — Hunters have killed eight Black Hills mountain lions so far this hunting season, including two Saturday.

Lion season started six days earlier this year than last. An official with the state Game, Fish & Parks in Rapid City says that it's hard to tell if the 100-lion quota will be met.

Mike Kintigh, regional supervisor for the GF&P, tells the *Rapid City Journal* that he'd expected Saturday's number to be higher because the lions are easier to track after snowfall settles.

The maximum allowed number of lions killed this season is 100, or 70 females, whichever happens first. Kintigh says hunters have a long way to go.

In addition to the lions killed Saturday, four were killed Wednesday, and one apiece Thursday and Friday.

SD Store Clerk Wields Stick To Foil Robbery

BELLE FOURCHE (AP) — A convenience store clerk in western South Dakota used a stick to scare away a man trying to rob the store.

The *Rapid City Journal* reports that a man entered the convenience store in Belle Fourche early Saturday and demanded that the clerk put money into a bag. Police say the man fled when the clerk refused to hand over any money and then threatened the would-be robber with a stick.

Police Chief Rob Hansen said authorities were still looking for the suspect later Saturday.

Nebraska Fireworks Stand Numbers Fizzle

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A Nebraska law that lets local governments decide whether to allow fireworks sales for the New Year's Eve holiday is proving to be a bit of a dud for sparkler enthusiasts.

The number of fireworks stands has declined since the law went into effect in 2010, according to the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's office. Twenty-seven stands are registered for business this year, down from 28 the previous year and 45 in 2010.

Assistant State Fire Marshal Jim Heine said he can't point to a specific reason for the decline, but he speculates that low temperatures are keeping residents away from the outdoors activity.

Training Expansion On Hold For B-1 And B-52 Bombers

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A plan to more than triple the airspace in which the U.S. Air Force can conduct training exercises with its Dakotas-based B-1 and B-52 bombers is still awaiting a final environmental impact statement.

The six-year effort to expand the airspace is a complex process that involves working with the Federal Aviation Administration, the region's Native American tribes and the public through a detailed environmental review.

A draft environmental impact

statement was released in August 2010, and public hearings were held in the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana later that year to solicit public comments.

Officials earlier had expected the statement to released last winter.

Air Force spokesman Maj. Matthew Reese says it's still being finalized, and it's currently out of the hands of Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Fiscal Cliff

Race Is On To Shield S.D. Assets

By The Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — South Dakotans are scrambling to protect family farms, businesses and other assets as lawmakers in Washington struggle to strike a deal before the so-called "fiscal cliff" prompts a variety of tax hikes in the new year.

Lawyers and court workers said they've seen more business than usual in the past few weeks as residents worry that Congress and President Barack Obama will continue the stalemate that's thwarted efforts to avert mandatory spending cuts and tax increases on Jan. 1.

"It is absolutely crazy," Brad Grossenburg, a lawyer with the business-focused firm Woods, Fuller, Shultz & Smith, told the Argus Leader newspaper. "Year-ends are always busy when you're in my business. But this is extraordinarily busy, probably twice what we usually do. And it's all because of the uncertainty."

Nationwide, South Dakota is regarded as one of the best places to set up a trust, a legal entity that can help shelter land and other assets from tax liabilities.

Karl Thoenes, administrator for the 2nd Circuit Court in Sioux Falls, has reassigned staff to deal with a "dramatic increase" in trust fil-

ings in the past two weeks, the newspaper reported. Thoenes said there were recently 20 filings in one day.

"We're prepared if we get a rush to the courthouse," he said. "There are attorneys working on trusts that are going to be putting in some late nights."

Republican and Democratic negotiators in the Senate had hoped for a deal as early as Sunday on what threshold to set for increased tax rates, whether to keep current inheritance tax rates and exemptions and how to pay for jobless benefits and avoid cuts in Medicare payments to doctors.

An agreement would halt automatic across-the-board tax increases for virtually every American and perhaps temporarily put off some steep spending cuts in defense and domestic programs.

But The Associated Press reported Sunday that if a deal is reached, it likely would be on a smaller scale than the president and Congress had initially envisioned, leaving some deadlines in place that will likely lead to similar moments of brinkmanship, some in just a matter of weeks.

The uncertainty especially reverberates in South Dakota, which 2nd Circuit Court Judge

William Srstka described as a "very big player in the trust world."

Many trusts drafted in South Dakota are created by out-of-staters. One reason for the popularity here: State law allows creators' names to be sealed, so the people behind the trusts and the details of the agreements aren't public.

"There are some really big names, too," Srstka said, who said he told 2nd Circuit lawyers he'd be around Monday for last-minute filings.

"I just let everybody know that rather than hunting around for a judge, I'll be available," he said.

John Childers is a president and broker with Agri Affiliates Inc., a Nebraska firm that praises agricultural land in the Midwest. The firm has been doing double its typical workload in the past few weeks compared to other year-ends, he said.

Farmers are land-rich but cash-poor, he said. If the estate tax exclusion drops to \$1 million, as some reports have suggested, many family farms would be imperiled by a hefty tax bill.

"There's no God-blessed way in God's world to pay that tax," he said.

New Year To Usher In Nebraska State Laws

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska will ring in 2013 on Tuesday with new laws that will increase county filing fees for mortgages, offer tax breaks for new data centers and allow golf cars to drive on roads near courses.

The measures are among 10 Nebraska state laws that will go into effect on Jan. 1.

The new year will usher in an increase in county filing fees for mortgages, deeds, wills and other property documents. Some of the increased revenue will help register-of-deed offices post more public documents online, while the rest will go to county general funds. The law ends in 2018, a requirement that lawmakers added to force officials to show that they had used the money as intended and justify continuing the higher fees.

The fees will increase for the first time in 28 years, said Roger Keetle, a legislative aide for state Sen. John Wightman, of Lexington, who sponsored the bill.

"It's a long overdue increase" for counties, Keetle said, because years of inflation have eroded the value of the fees and placed more pressure on counties' general funds.

Counties will charge a \$10 fee for the first page of a filing and \$6 for each subsequent page, up from the current \$5-per-page charge on most documents. The law also will repeal a 50-cent indexing fee for lots that are recorded. Of the \$10 fee charged on the first page, \$2.50 will go into the register's technology upgrade fund. For every page that costs \$5, the fund will collect 50 cents.

Lawmakers in previous years had resisted the proposal, but the

measure gained support this year because it dedicates part of the money for technology upgrades in recorder offices. The money previously funneled into county general funds, allowing county officials to use it however they wanted.

Another law will allow special-interest motor vehicles in Nebraska to sport only one license plate. The law is aimed at specialty or classic cars that aren't intended for regular travel. The law was supported by the Nebraska Corvette

Association and other car-collector groups.

A third new tax incentive law sponsored by Bellevue Sen. Abbie Cornett is designed to attract data centers to Nebraska and encourage expansions, including one by internet search engine Yahoo! in LaVista, an Omaha suburb. The law offers property and sales-tax exemptions to firms in Nebraska.

Lawmakers and Gov. Dave Heineman also passed a law this year that will allow motorists to

drive golf cars on roads that run adjacent and contiguous to golf courses, if the local county or city government approves. To use the golf cars on roads, operators must have a driver's license and liability insurance.

The bill's sponsor, Bancroft Sen. Lydia Brasch, told a legislative panel in January that she introduced the bill after she was approached by constituents in the towns of Oakland and Tekamah.


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