

Hearing For Omaha Killings Faces Delays

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A sentencing hearing is again expected to be delayed for a man facing a possible death sentence for killing four people in Omaha just weeks after he left prison.

Douglas County District Judge Peter Bataillon on Friday ordered Nikko Jenkins to undergo a competency evaluation to determine whether he is mentally fit enough to defend himself at sentencing, which had been set for Jan. 4, the *Omaha World-Herald* reported.

Jenkins was convicted last year of first-degree murder in the fatal shooting of four people in Omaha over a 10-day period in August 2013 just days after being released from prison.

A three-judge panel had been scheduled to convene Jan. 4 to determine whether Jenkins, 29, deserves the death penalty for the killings of Jorge Cajiga-Ruiz, Juan Uribe-Pena, Curtis Bradford and Andrea Kruger.

If delayed, it will be the fourth time judges have had to set Jenkins' death-penalty hearing. Jenkins death-penalty hearing was initially set for Aug. 11, 2014. Competency evaluations for Jenkins have stalled his case several times.

Jenkins has insisted he doesn't remember the killings and that an Egyptian god ordered him to kill the four as human sacrifices.

A defense psychiatrist has testified at hearings that Jenkins suffers from schizophrenia and perhaps a bipolar disorder, while state psychiatrists have testified that Jenkins is faking mental illness.

"Frustrating is a word that doesn't adequately describe the situation we're in here," said Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine. "It's extremely frustrating. ... It's been an ongoing struggle to bring this matter to an end. Everyone wants to have some closure here."

Police ID Body Found In Omaha House

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Police have arrested a suspect in the death of a woman whose body was found in a north Omaha home.

Police say the body of 57-year-old Linda Chase was found Saturday morning by family members who arrived at the home.

Police were called to the house around 11:20 a.m. Saturday for a possible cutting. They say a 31-year-old man was booked in the Douglas County Jail and faces a criminal homicide charge.

Omaha television station WOWT reports that the victim was stabbed to death, although police have not yet listed a cause of death.

Flood Potential Seen For Nebraska, Iowa

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Several flood warnings have been issued in southeast Nebraska and southwest Iowa after prolonged steady rain in the area.

The National Weather Service issued the flood warnings for several areas around the Missouri River in southeast Nebraska and around the Nishnabotna River in western Iowa.

Heavy rain fell in the area where Nebraska and Iowa meet Saturday night. More than two inches of rain was recorded in some places between 7 a.m. Saturday and 7 a.m. Sunday, and the rain was continuing.

The Weather Service says moderate flooding is possible over the next couple days along those rivers.

SD Man Sentenced On Child Porn Charge

RAPID CITY (AP) — A Rapid City man has been sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for producing child pornography on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

U.S. District Court Chief Judge Jeffrey Viken also ordered 22-year-old Jesse Gallego to spend five years of supervised release following his prison term. Gallego in August pleaded guilty to one count of production of child pornography. As part of a plea agreement, one count of aggravated sexual abuse of a minor was dismissed.

Federal authorities accused Gallego of taking multiple pornographic photos of a 7-year-old girl he was babysitting on November 2014. Authorities say Gallego took the photos with a cellphone while the girl was sleeping.

Gallego is now under the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

Man Rescued After Falling Through Ice

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Members of the Harford Fired Department rescued a man who fell through the ice while fishing near the city.

The *Argus Leader* reports that it happened Friday night at Scott's Slough.

Authorities say two fellow fishermen tried to rescue the man before emergency crews arrived but one of them also went under water for a short time.

Authorites say no injuries were reported.

Skateboarder Struck By Police Cruiser

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A skateboarder in the middle of one of Omaha's busiest streets is recovering after being hit by a police cruiser.

Police say the 19-year-old man suffered leg injuries in the late Friday night accident.

Police say Officer Patrick Soltys was westbound on Dodge Street and hit Thafer Alshomari as he crested a hill in the street.

Police say Alshomari was riding a skateboard in the center lane of Dodge Street when he was hit.

Police say several witnesses on the sidewalk had shouted at Alshomari to get out of the street just before he was hit.

Disclaimer Resolves SF Snowplow Debate

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — City-owned snowplows in Sioux Falls are again displaying some religious symbolism, but the debate sparked last year by the artwork of some local students seems to have quieted down.

A disclaimer affixed to the snowplows explaining the city doesn't endorse the religious messages appears to have created an apathetic harmony among both sides of the First Amendment-fueled debate, the *Argus Leader* reported.

Public and private school students in Sioux Falls decorate plow blades as part of an annual event, and some students have used the program as an opportunity to express their faith. Some of the blades this year include messages such as "One nation under God" and "God will clear a way," while two parochial schools participating in the city's Paint the Plows program last December decorated the blades with the words "Jesus Christ" and "Happy Birthday Jesus."

The local secular group, Siouxland Freethinkers, complained about the artwork last winter saying that it violated the constitutional separation of church and state, prompting city officials to affix the disclaimer to the plows.

But while the debate has cooled, the president of the local group still has misgivings.

"If it was a plow mentioning Muhammad would you feel the same way?" Allen Larson said. "If it was a plow mentioning Hanukkah would you feel the same way?"

South Dakota

State Vet Doesn't See Trich Outbreak On Par With 2005

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — South Dakota's state veterinarian says further testing of cattle herds could reveal some more instances of a reproductive disease that causes cows to abort their young, but he doesn't expect an outbreak like one that hit western South Dakota in 2005.

The state saw no cases of bovine trichomoniasis — or trich — last year and just one the previous year, but veterinarians recently diagnosed trich in two Oglala Lakota county cattle herds and one herd operating in Corson and Ziebach counties. The disease poses no risk for humans, as it affects only a cow's reproductive system, but its occurrence can quickly cut into a rancher's bottom line, said State Veterinarian Dustin Oedekoven.

"This is certainly one of those diseases that can be economically devastating," Oedekoven said.

The disease is caused by a protozoal organism that lives indefinitely in the sheath of an infected bull. Once a bull transmits the disease to a female through breeding, it causes an inflammation in the reproductive tract that results in the loss of the pregnancy, according to the South Dakota State University Extension Service. Infected cows can clear themselves of the infection, but bulls remain positive for life.

South Dakota's 2005 outbreak — in which vets confirmed 45 cases of the disease, all west of the Missouri River — prompted the Animal Industry Board to issue several rules to prevent its spread:

- Any non-virgin bull must be tested negative for trichomoniasis prior to being sold, loaned or leased in South Dakota for breeding purposes
- Any non-virgin bull entering South Dakota must be tested negative for trichomoniasis
- No non-virgin and non-pregnant female cattle may be imported, loaned,



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

leased nor acquired for breeding purposes in South Dakota

Oedekoven said the rules have greatly reduced the occurrence of the disease, but trich can occur in remote areas of the Badlands because the separation of bulls doesn't always happen. He said the state's low numbers in recent years might have also nudged many in the industry toward complacency with vaccinations.

"If we don't have a case for a while, everyone kind of forgets to vaccinate and pretty soon we've got a problem," he said.

Beth Carlson, North Dakota's deputy state veterinarian, said that state hasn't seen any cases of the disease for several years, "and I believe that was an imported animal in a cooperative grazing situation."

Carlson said North Dakota doesn't have in-state testing requirements, but it has interstate movement regulations similar to South Dakota and it the movement of open cows, which are females yet to be bred.

Ranchers are often unaware of the

problem until the disease is well established in the herd. Some signs that the disease may be present in a herd include a high number of open cows, cows showing signs of heat when they should be pregnant and the presence of many late-calving cows, according to the Animal Industry Board.

The board offers several steps that ranchers can take to help prevent their herds from infection:

- Only purchase and use virgin bulls for breeding
- If purchasing non-virgin bulls, they should be tested negative prior to breeding
- Perform timely pregnancy testing of females and promptly remove open cows to be sold for feeding and slaughter
- Maintain good border fencing to help keep livestock in their respective pastures

"The neighboring herds are at risk," Oedekoven said. "Bulls sometimes hop the fence."

Nebraska

Natural Gas Fueling Stations Could Be Boost

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Drivers of cars and trucks powered by compressed natural gas could travel across Nebraska if fueling stations open next year as planned.

The expected stations in North Platte would close a major gap on Interstate 80 and allow more vehicles to make the trip from Omaha and Lincoln to fueling stops in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Denver.

One project is moving forward with a \$590,000 grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, a state agency that uses Nebraska Lottery money and interest for environmental projects. Two companies partnered with North Platte city officials last year to apply for the money, which would help build the station and convert city vehicles so they could use compressed natural gas.

The city has since postponed its conversion, but an executive with Lincoln-based Stirk Compressed Natural Gas said his company still plans to begin construction on the station by June 30. Another firm, California-based Clean Energy Fuels, was granted approval in 2012 for a liquid natural gas refueling facility at a North Platte truck stop. Company spokesman Jason Johnston said the station is scheduled to open in February.

"It's on the cusp of becoming mainstream," said Kirk McClymont, a senior manager at the Lincoln-based Stirk Compressed Natural Gas.

Compressed natural gas burns cleaner and quieter than diesel, costs less and frequently allows engines to run with less maintenance. Its price is also more stable because of a steady supply from North American shale formations. City buses, garbage

trucks and fire trucks around the country are converting as local governments come under pressure to reduce carbon emissions.

But switching from a traditional diesel truck can cost tens of thousands of dollars. New trucks that run on compressed natural gas may cost up to \$45,000 more than traditional diesel-powered models, McClymont said. Industry experts say converting a fleet makes the most financial sense when diesel prices are high, because companies recover their investments faster through savings when the cost difference between natural gas and diesel is large.

The lack of stations in western Nebraska makes it difficult for compressed natural gas vehicles to cross the state, McClymont said.

McClymont said some natural gas bus manufacturers have adapted by towing their

buses across the state or bypassing Nebraska altogether. Many westbound vehicles opt to travel farther south through Oklahoma, which has an abundance of stations.

McClymont said his company chose North Platte because it sits roughly halfway between Omaha and Denver — both cities with natural gas refueling stations.

The North Platte station could also help natural gas trucks make deliveries in areas far from the interstate.

McClymont, whose company owns a compressed natural gas semi, said the company previously had no way to haul loads from Lincoln to western Kansas because the truck didn't carry enough fuel for the round trip. A new station set to open in Garden City, Kansas, this month will alleviate the problem.

Health Love Happiness

May all the gifts of the
holiday season be yours

 YANKTON MEDICAL CLINIC®, P.C.

605-665-7841 • www.YanktonMedicalClinic.com
1104 West 8th Street • Yankton, SD 57078

Santa Says,
"Shop Locally!"

