

Proposal To Build Tallest Building In State

ST. LOUIS (AP) — St. Louis officials say one proposal for utilizing a small triangle of city-owned property could create the tallest building in the state.

The St. Louis *Argus Leader* reports that the city asked for ideas for the three-quarter-acre property that straddles the Big River. It had been the site of a parking ramp.

The high-rise is one of three proposals that were submitted. The other two would use the space for park land and further develop the green space and riverfront.

The building would have 15 total levels with underground parking and rooftop garden. Plans for the 90,000-square-foot structure include a riverfront restaurant, several stories of office space and up to six stories of luxury residential units.

The building could cost \$35 million.

Council Considering Regulating Drone Use

ABERDEEN (AP) — Aberdeen leaders are considering regulating the use of hobby and recreational drones in the city.

The *American News* reports that the City Council is considering an ordinance that would prohibit the use of the unmanned aerial vehicles on city property, with the exception of two city parks.

Residents could still operate drones on private property with permission from the property owners. But other restrictions would apply, including no drone use after dark or by children.

“We’re not trying to be anti-drone,” City Manager Lynn Lander said. “We’re just trying to be responsible.”

Local businessman Travis Schaunaman argues the ordinance is premature and not yet needed.

“In terms of privacy, there’s laws that prevent you from taking pictures of people,” Schaunaman said.

Each drone is equipped with a camera but, Schaunaman argues, but they don’t have the ability to zoom. So getting a close-up shot of something requires the drone to be nearby.

“I think their intention is good,” Schaunaman said. “They’re trying to protect people. I don’t think it’s the concern people think it is.”

Lander has said drones are the latest technical advancement that the city needs to address. Although this ordinance restricts hobby and recreational use, he also sees the benefit of drone use, such as using drones to apply larvicide to ponds.

The proposed ordinance in Aberdeen melds federal regulations and guidelines with ordinances adopted or considered by other communities. Businessman Travis Schaunaman says he doesn’t think a city ordinance is needed in Aberdeen.

Suspect Found By Leaving Snowy Tracks

GERING, Neb. (AP) — Police in western Nebraska found a burglary suspect after following footprints in the snow.

KNEB reports Gering Police were called to a repair shop Sunday morning to investigate a possible burglary.

The tracks in the snow led officers to a home where some of the stolen items and a suspect were found.

The 28-year-old told police he and another man had taken tools, a computer reader, police scanners and emergency lights from the business the previous night.

Police were still searching Monday for the other suspect in the burglary. A third man has been charged with possessing more than \$5,000 worth of stolen property.

Officers Finding Careers In School System

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Several former Lincoln police officers are making new careers in the city’s public school system, including the former police captain.

Joe Wright was hired three years ago as the security director at Lincoln Public Schools, the *Lincoln Journal Star* reported. He recently hired another 15-year police department veteran to fill a new position: security coordinator.

Jason Brownell was right for the position, Wright said, given his background in the Lincoln Police Department’s family crimes unit. Brownell also served as a high school resource officer, and Wright said his work as the department’s domestic violence coordinator has already been helpful in working on school safety plans for mothers who are domestic violence victims.

The city has four former Lincoln police officers working as high school campus supervisors, and they’re not alone in making the move from the squad to the school. Two former officers are para-educators, a former police department employee is a custodian and one former officer is a computer programmer for the district.

“LPD’s footprint at LPS is huge,” Wright said. “I like having a pool of people with police experience working with us because they have that eye; (they know) de-escalation techniques.”

Wright said he’s thinking about making a shirt for the growing number of police officers who have found second careers at the school district: LPD written in chalk, with the “D” erased and replaced with an “S.”

Board To Discuss Budget Proposal

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents is discussing Gov. Dennis Daugaard’s budget plan for the upcoming budget year.

The board is set to hold a special meeting about the spending proposal and other legislative matters on Tuesday.

Much of the roughly \$60 million in one-time spending included in the governor’s budget would go to paying off debt to help the state’s public universities and technical schools freeze tuition for the next school year.

Mike Rush is executive director and CEO of the state Board of Regents. He has said the freeze would reduce the amount students have to borrow or pay out of pocket for school.

S. Dakota Prison Population Dips, Parole Success Grows

BY JAMES NORD  
Associated Press

PIERRE — A landmark public safety overhaul passed in 2013 has staved off gains in South Dakota’s prison population by more than initially expected while also boosting the number of offenders who are successfully completing their parole, state officials said Monday.

The legislation changed how the state handles nonviolent drug offenders and authorized the South Dakota Supreme Court to set up drug courts in any jurisdiction in the state. The overhaul aims to boost rehabilitation rates and reduce corrections spending, with more focus on violent and career criminals.

According to a report from a public safety panel charged with examining the effects of the law, it’s too early to call the overhaul an irrefutable success, but the first two years of results “foreshadow the coming victories.”

Here are some of the findings:

PRISON POPULATION

South Dakota’s overall prison population — sitting at about 3,560 people at the end of June 2015 — has dipped more than originally projected. And without implementing the overhaul, the Pew Charitable Trusts estimates the state’s prisoner count at that time would have been about 3,875.

The effect of curbing that

growth is tens of millions of dollars in averted spending on a new women’s prison and ongoing costs, according to the report.

PAROLE SUCCESS

The report says budget year 2015 saw 65 percent of offenders successfully complete parole supervision, a 5 percentage point jump over fiscal year 2014 and an improvement from 37 percent in 2012.

A significant number of South Dakota’s prisoners are locked up for parole violations, said Jim Seward, general counsel for Gov. Dennis Daugaard and head of the panel. That means increasing the successful completion of parole also helps slow the growth in the number of

people who are incarcerated, he said.

DRUG COURT GAINS

The legislation aimed to build on the drug court’s existing successes in saving state funds and improving rehabilitation rates. The state drug court capacity jumped from 45 people in budget year 2011 to accommodating 245 people in budget year 2015, according to the report.

In 2014, there were nearly 100 people accepted, up from 69 people in 2013. Seward said the courts hold offenders accountable with intense supervision and treatment while keeping them in their communities.

Norfolk Southern Again Rejects Canadian Pacific’s Merger Bid

BY JOSH FUNK  
AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. — Norfolk Southern railroad says Canadian Pacific’s latest takeover offer is still “grossly inadequate” and unlikely to be approved by federal regulators.

The Norfolk, Virginia, railroad sent a letter Monday reiterating its rejection of the revised offer Canadian Pacific delivered last week.

Canadian Pacific officials have said they’re ready to take their offer directly to shareholders because Norfolk Southern executives have been unwilling to sit down and negotiate. Canadian Pacific officials didn’t respond immediately Monday morning.

Norfolk Southern estimates that the latest cash and stock offer would be worth roughly \$27 billion based on Canadian Pacific’s stock price.

Canadian Pacific says the offer is worth somewhere between \$37 billion and \$42 billion because its estimate is based on the projected value of stock in a new company that would own both railroads.

Norfolk Southern also rejected Canadian Pacific’s initial offer last month. The latest offer includes \$32.86 cash and 0.451 shares in the combined company that would own both railroads. Norfolk Southern shareholders would own 47 percent of the new company.

In addition to concerns about price, Norfolk Southern’s said it believes the proposed merger is unlikely to be approved by regulators because of the tough standard for railroad deals the Surface Transportation Board established in 2001.

No major railroad mergers have been approved in more than 15 years because federal regulators say mergers can’t hurt competition and shouldn’t cause major service problems.

Many industry analysts predict that if regulators approved a Canadian Pacific merger with Norfolk Southern, other major railroad deals would likely follow.

Nebraska State Patrol, Omaha Police Faced Spending Freeze

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska State Patrol and the Omaha Police Department earlier this year had been ordered to halt their spending of funds seized during drug busts and traffic stops because of irregularities found by a federal compliance check.

The *Omaha World-Herald* reports that the agencies received the order from the U.S. Department of Justice earlier this year. The state patrol’s freeze lasted six months, and the Omaha police spending freeze lasted nine months.

Col. Brad Rice, the super-

intendent of the Nebraska State Patrol, said the freeze was mostly the result of disagreements about rules and accounting practices, which have now been cleared up.

The patrol transferred \$29,000 in funds to correct mistaken expenditures and was able to resume spending after pleading its case in October to the Justice Department.

Omaha police resumed spending on Nov. 10 after it provided further documentation for \$45,000 in “partially questionable” expenditures and after transferring \$825

to cover spending that the Justice Department determined was impermissible or questionable.

The police department, which currently has about \$1 million in seizure funds, was able to utilize other money until the freeze was lifted.

A Justice Department spokesman, Peter Carr, said such freezes are not uncommon and are not considered punishments.

Carr says that the department began ordering spending restrictions in 2014, and that 39 law enforcement agencies around the nation have

been temporarily banned from spending funds.

According to the spokesman, the spending freezes for the state patrol and the Omaha Police Department were the first ordered ever in Nebraska.

State Sen. Tommy Garrett says he will introduce legislation next month to require state and local law enforcement agencies to file annual reports with the state auditor about how much they seized and how the funds were spent.

Sioux Falls Neighborhood Fights Historic Designation

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Property owners have blocked a move to nominate a Sioux Falls neighborhood for the National Register of Historic Places, and say the city wasted money on the effort.

The register lists properties the federal government considers worthy of recognition and preservation. A resident had asked that Sioux Falls’ Pendar Lane neighborhood be nominated.

The South Dakota State Historical Society said it received letters of objection from more than half of the neighborhood homeowners, and Historic Preservation Director Ted Spencer said the society won’t be nominating the area.

The proposed historic district

would have included about 300 homes. The neighborhood is home to Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mission/Spanish Revival and Bungalow/Craftsman homes, according to the petition for inclusion as a historic district.

“There’s a really neat, eclectic mix of architectural style there,” Spencer told the *Argus Leader* newspaper. “It’s kind of a neat area to walk through and see such a variety.”

Being in a designated historic district makes homes eligible for historic preservation grants and tax rebates. However, it also means that property owners need to get approval from a state historic preservation officer before performing renova-

tions or home improvements that require a building permit, according to state law.

“That’s more of my freedom than I’m going to give up,” said neighborhood resident Joe Hurly, who organized the dissent.

The city used state grant money to pay a consulting firm \$30,000 to start the nomination process, according to KELO-TV. Hurley said the city should have asked residents their thoughts about being an historic district before spending the money.

City Planner Mike Cooper called it “a lesson learned.”

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