

MIDWEST DIGEST

S.D. House Stops Uniform Alcohol Sales Bill

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota House has rejected a plan to let people buy alcohol any day of the year. The measure failed on a vote of 34-35 on Monday after opponents said they don't want to open up the sale of wine and liquor on Christmas and Memorial Day. Rep. Charles Turbiville, R-Deadwood, said he intends to ask the House to reconsider the measure. Turbiville says the bill is aimed at setting uniform rules and ending confusion about when different kinds of alcohol can be sold in different kinds of establishments. The bill would allow beer, wine and liquor sales for consumption on and off the premises from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. on any day. Cities and counties could still restrict alcohol sales if they wish.

S.D. House Panel Approves Court Fee

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota House committee has approved a measure that would increase court filing fees to pay for a new computer records management system for the state's court system. The increased fees are intended to raise an additional \$1.3 million a year to help pay for upgrading the computer programs the court system uses to manage cases. The upgrade is expected to cost \$11.8 million. South Dakota Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson says some of the computer software used by the courts was developed more than two decades ago and can no longer be maintained. The upgrade would eventually enable people to view court documents over the Internet. The Judiciary Committee voted unanimously to send the bill to the full House.

S.D. Session Will Examine Indian Crime

SIoux FALLS (AP) — U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson has invited South Dakota's Indian tribes to what he calls a "listening conference" about crime on their reservations. He calls it a "complex puzzle" with a lot of pieces that will require cooperation of federal, state and tribal governments. Johnson says the first step is to listen to the concerns of Indian communities most affected by crime. Oglala Sioux Tribal President Theresa Two Bulls said Thursday's meeting is encouraging and will be fruitful if Johnson and his staff listen and deliver the message higher up within the U.S. Justice Department.

S.D. House Drops Purchase Review Bill

PIERRE (AP) — Legislation that would require state agencies to hold a public hearing before purchasing land was rejected Monday in a House committee. Rep. Tom Deadrick of Platte said his bill would bring transparency to the process. Three state agencies testified against the bill. The Department of Transportation and the Department of Game, Fish and Parks said they already provide public notice and opportunity for comment. Corrections Secretary Tim Reisch said the bill would make it nearly impossible for his department to buy land because no one wants a prison for a neighbor.

Neb. Lawmakers Begin Helmet Debate

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — State Sen. Ken Haar of Lincoln is convinced a helmet saved his life 25 years ago when a car barreled through an intersection and ran into his Honda motorcycle. State Sen. Charlie Janssen of Fremont, meanwhile, is convinced Nebraska is losing tax revenue to motorcyclists who bypass the state and that they have a right to let the wind blow through their hair. Arguments on both sides of the helmet issue were made on Monday in the Nebraska Legislature. Lawmakers began debating a bill (LB200) from Janssen that would repeal the state's helmet law. They did not vote on the bill, which would allow people 21 years old and older to ride without helmets. Nebraska is one of about 20 states that requires helmets to be worn.

Ice Storm Hampers S.D. Ranchers

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The Agriculture Department says a late-January ice storm in South Dakota has made it difficult for many ranchers to maintain a water supply for livestock. The department says in its weekly crop and weather report that cold temperatures and snow across the state also have meant ranchers need to feed animals more than normal, but adequate and accessible feed supplies have prevented major cattle and sheep deaths.

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Neb. Lawmakers To Hear In-State Tuition Arguments

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — An attempt to repeal a law granting in-state tuition to some illegal immigrants in Nebraska is in jeopardy and may not be debated by the full Legislature this year.

Dozens of supporters and opponents of the 2006 law that made Nebraska one of 10 states in the country that allows some illegal immigrants to get in-state tuition at state-funded colleges crowded a Capitol room to plead their cases to the Legislature's Education Committee.

But comments from committee members indicated most of them may not want to help repeal the law that has been a lightning rod in the immigration debate in Nebraska.

"Sadly, I don't think it will advance out of committee," the bill's sponsor, Sen. Charlie Janssen of Fremont said after stepping out of the committee room. "Members of the Education Committee will have some explaining to do," to the public.

The law allows illegal immigrants to pay in-state tuition if they graduated from Nebraska high schools, lived in the state for at least three years and are pursuing or promise to pursue legal status. According to legislative fiscal analysts, 37 illegal immigrants are paying in-state tuition at the University of Nebraska.

On Monday, five of the Education Committee's eight members either expressed opposition to the repeal bill or four years ago voted in favor of in-state tuition for some illegal immigrant. However, a majority of lawmakers who responded to an Associated Press survey last

year said they would support rescinding the law.

The in-state tuition bill has a history of igniting fervent public debate over immigration, and rendering political consequences.

Gov. Dave Heineman vetoed the in-state tuition bill in 2006, but the Legislature overrode his veto. Many voters in the 2006 Republican gubernatorial primary said they chose Heineman over Tom Osborne, a sitting U.S. representative and wildly popular former Nebraska football coach, because Osborne supported the tuition bill.

Opponents say the law is unfair to legal residents and conflicts with a 1996 federal law that prohibits higher education institutions giving benefits to illegal immigrants without offering the same break to U.S. citizens. Last month, Kansas attorney Kris Kobach filed a lawsuit challenging the validity of the law. The lawsuit names the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and other state college boards as defendants.

State Sen. Bill Avery of Lincoln told Kobach during testimony at the public hearing that repealing the law would amount to "punishing children for the misdeeds of their parents." The law is meant for students whose parents brought them to the U.S. illegally.

Kobach said the law helps subsidize an illegal work force. He also said most students won't be able to use the degrees because they won't be able to attain legal status.

"U.S. citizens are paying two times as much, U.S. citizens aren't breaking the law," he said in response to Avery.

WINTER WEATHER

Reservation Struggling After Storms

Parts Of S.D. Reservation Still Without Water, Electricity For Over Two Weeks

BY WAYNE ORTMAN
Associated Press Writer

EAGLE BUTTE — Parts of a sprawling South Dakota reservation still were without water and electricity Monday, nearly two weeks after winter storms toppled thousands of power lines, caused water pipes to freeze and burst, and forced more than a dozen residents on kidney dialysis to seek treatment at another reservation.

A fierce ice storm hit the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation overnight Jan. 20, coating roads and electrical lines and forcing shops and schools to close. Before residents could recover from the ice, a blizzard tore through the Dakotas, bringing a few inches of snow and wind gusts between 25 and 50 mph.

Several shelters and distribution centers were set up around the reservation, and an 8 p.m. curfew was imposed after some looting took place last week. At the height of the outages, about 14,000 people in the region were without water — most of them on the impoverished reservation that covers an area larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined.

About 8,000 people live on the reservation, among the rolling, grass-covered prairies of north central South Dakota that includes Dewey and Ziebach counties. The tribe says unemployment on the reservation is at 80 percent.

More than half of Ziebach County and 38 percent of Dewey County lived in poverty in 2005, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Tribal Chairman Joseph Brings Plenty said Monday that no deaths had been reported, though a few people reported becoming ill because of fumes from gas-powered heaters.

"I thank the Creator for that, because we could have had quite a few people perish in this," he said.

Seventeen kidney dialysis patients from the reservation were moved to a hotel at the Prairie Winds Casino in southwest South Dakota, said Rick Shangreaux, the casino's acting general manager. Indian Health Services nurses are monitoring the patients, who will get treatment at a facility on the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwest South Dakota.

Curtis Chasing Hawk, 56, was getting his thrice-weekly dialysis treatments at Pine Ridge after leaving the Cheyenne River reservation last week.

"The roads were all icy and the power was out," Chasing Hawk said. "We formed a five-car caravan and got out."

Mona Longbrake said she and her husband, Dilbert, have not had electricity or running water at their ranch about 12 miles southeast of Eagle Butte since Jan. 22. They have been drinking bottled water, cracking ice on a pond to get water to flush their toi-

let, using an oven range for heat, and using candles and flashlights for light.

"It's getting tired," Mona Longbrake said. "You get by as best you can."

Sonny Brave Eagle said he, his wife and their two young daughters have split time between an emergency shelter and a relative's house in Eagle Butte where four other families have crowded in.

He said he and his family were stranded about six days in the dark at their home 12 miles north of Eagle Butte until law officers came out to check on them.

"We didn't have a vehicle ... We had no phone, no batteries for the radio," he said.

"We didn't know what was going on."

Water and power outages struck all of the reservation's residents, tribal spokeswoman Natalie Stites said. Water outages for many lasted about four days, and power outages for some are into their second week. Residents couldn't even get gas for their vehicles because service station pumps weren't working without electricity.

By Monday, outages were no longer considered a crisis, but the tribe was still in an "immediate response" mode, Stites said. The tribe has spent "enormous amounts" of money on such needs as fuel and water and an emergency fund that had \$175,000 a few months ago has been drained.

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Entrée selection: Cornish Game Hen served with seasoned wild rice, green beans almandine, Romaine salad with your choice of dressing, garlic bread stick and dessert OR Fantail Shrimp served with garlic mashed potatoes, green beans almandine, Romaine salad with your choice of dressing, garlic bread stick and dessert.
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