

S.D. AG: Altercation Led Deputy To Shoot Man

WARD (AP) — The South Dakota attorney general's office says an altercation between two Minnesota men led to a short vehicle pursuit that escalated into a Moody County sheriff's deputy shooting one of the men.

Attorney General Marty Jackley says Deputy Nathan Bowden fired his duty weapon and struck 59-year-old Robert Alan Nosbusch, who was armed with a 45 caliber pistol.

KSFY television reports that the deputy, in an affidavit filed Friday, says he fired his weapon to protect himself and another man. Jackley says the incident began around noon Thursday in rural Moody County with an altercation between Nosbusch and 51-year-old Ricky Jay Christian, both from Pipestone, Minn.

Moody County state's attorney Bill Ellingson says Nosbusch was taken by ambulance to a hospital and treated for wounds.

Man Sentenced For Assaulting Trooper

PIERRE (AP) — A 77-year-old Onida man was sentenced to 89 days in jail for assaulting a female South Dakota Highway Patrol trooper in August 2010.

KCCR radio reports that Judge Kathleen Trandahl on Friday sentenced Chester Strickland to 360 days with 270 days suspended and one day for time served for simple assault of a law enforcement officer.

Strickland pleaded no contest to the charge and concealed weapon possession without a permit.

Prosecutors say Trooper Deanna Goeman discovered a concealed handgun in the glove compartment of Strickland's vehicle during a traffic stop. As Goeman tried to place Strickland under arrest, he punched her three times in the face.

S.D. House To Weigh Bill On Absentee Voting

PIERRE (AP) — Concerns that absentee voting needs regulating are leading South Dakota lawmakers to push a bill through the House that enforces a uniform system of casting ballots.

The measure describes two acceptable ways of absentee voting in all city, county and school elections.

They include either receiving the ballot in the mail and filling it out at home, or stopping by the office of the person in charge during the 46 voting days before Election Day.

Secretary of State Jason Gant says absentee votes have been cast at parent-teacher conferences, basketball games and the home of the person in charge of the election. He says that's "scary" because it could affect voters' decisions.

Economists: Neb. Economy To Keep Growing

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A new economic report suggests that Nebraska's economy will continue growing at a moderate pace in the next six months.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Bureau of Business Research issued a new monthly report on the state's economy Friday.

The university economists looked at six factors that help predict economic growth. They are single-family housing starts, airline passengers, initial unemployment claims, manufacturing hours, the value of the U.S. dollar and the data from a survey of Nebraska businesses.

UNL economist Eric Thompson says the only factor that suggested slower growth was the unemployment data. The building permit and manufacturing data was relatively flat, but all the other indicators suggest growth.

Thompson says the data suggests that Nebraska's economy will pick up speed later this spring into summer.

S.D. Guard Unit Likely To Serve In Kuwait

RAPID CITY (AP) — A South Dakota Army National Guard unit has been notified that it likely will be called to duty in Kuwait.

The Guard says the 33 members of the 935th Support Battalion's Detachment 1, Company B are tentatively scheduled to deploy in May. The soldiers will be maintaining and repairing aircraft for a combat aviation brigade.

This will be the second Middle East deployment for the Rapid City-based 935th, which served in Iraq in 2004-05.

Sioux Falls Residents Oppose New Walmart

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Some residents on the south side of Sioux Falls aren't happy about a proposed third Walmart store in the city.

More than 100 people attended a Thursday meeting to voice their concerns. Officials at Sioux Falls Christian Schools near the proposed site say they're worried about the increased traffic the store would bring. Some people who live in the area say they're worried about draining issues and a possible increase in crime.

Some who oppose the store have started a Facebook campaign against it.

Mail Delivered In Neb. 32 Years Later

HASTINGS, Neb. (AP) — A letter mailed 32 years ago in California has been delivered to the addressee in south-central Nebraska.

The Hastings Tribune reports the long-delayed mail arrived at the Hastings home of 83-year-old Vida Forsberg earlier this month.

The letter came from Carolyn Knudsen, wife of the former pastor at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Olin Knudsen. Forsberg says the Knudsens moved after Olin Knudsen joined the Air Force and was assigned to Edwards Air Force Base in California.

Forsberg says the letter included a thank-you for her service as president of the church council while Olin Knudsen was pastor.

Regional postal spokesman Brian Sperry says the delivery delay puzzled him. He says it's unclear whether the U.S. Postal Service had the letter or something else happened to it.

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Farmers Warned To Buy Crop Insurance

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI
 Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — A relatively snow-free winter in the Upper Midwest has some officials worried about damage to agriculture if the dry weather persists into spring planting.

Minnesota's agriculture and commerce commissioners, Dave Frederickson and Mike Rothman, signaled their concern when they advised farmers Thursday to buy crop insurance before next month's deadline. Most of Minnesota is in the earliest stage of drought, and parts of Iowa and the Dakotas also are abnormally dry or worse.

It's a marked change from this time last winter when many farmers in the Upper Midwest were more worried about spring flooding, and it comes at a time when farmers are hoping to take advantage of what's expected to be another good year for crop prices.

Minnesota state Climatologist Greg Spoden said Friday that the warning to buy crop in-

surance was reasonable given that much of the region suffered through its driest autumn on record after the rain suddenly stopped in 2011.

"They're not being alarmist at all," he said. But, there's also plenty of time for the skies to open up, rain and snow to fall and the soil to recover before spring planting, he said. The Climate Prediction Center at the National Weather Service says there's a greater-than-normal chance of precipitation in the eastern two-thirds of Minnesota and Iowa in March and a reasonable chance of normal precipitation across the Dakotas, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin for March through May.

"I don't mean to imply that disaster is imminent," Spoden said. "It just means it's prudent to start to prepare for that possibility."

North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring said many of his farmers couldn't even plant last spring because it was so wet, and the state still has plenty of moisture below the soil surface. If farmers can get

their seed into the ground and get enough spring rain for it to germinate, the plants should be able to send roots down to the wet zone and produce a good crop.

"It certainly is up in the air, but there are so many other things to be worried about at this time," Goehring said. "This one here might translate into something of concern or nothing at all, but it is a good time if we're going to be experiencing a drought to experience it now."

Several farmers said they're not particularly worried yet, but they have been in touch with their insurance agents. The Upper Midwest regularly sees some of the country's highest participation in the federal crop insurance program anyway.

The weather "is the one thing that's out of my control, but I do plan to buy crop insurance," said Alex Pirkel, who grows corn, soybeans, peas and sweet corn near Blooming Prairie in one of the driest parts of south-central Minnesota.

Forecast: Low Chance Of Major Floods In Neb., Iowa

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A repeat of last year's massive flooding along the Missouri River appears unlikely in Iowa and Nebraska.

The National Weather Service issued flooding forecasts this week, and said that the mild winter has lowered the state's risk. If the weather turns cold or additional snow arrives, however, the flood risk could increase. The three-month flood forecasts will be updated on March 1.

Last year, above-average snowpack combined with May's unexpected heavy rains in the Northern Plains caused the Missouri River to flood in June. The high waters continued well into the fall for some

places along the river's 2,341 miles. The flooding caused at least \$630 million in damage to flood-control structures and damaged hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland.

Hydrologist Dave Pearson said the current conditions do not appear conducive to large-scale flooding, but snow will continue to accumulate in the mountains for some time. The mountain snowpack that feeds into the Missouri River is at about 84 percent of normal levels at this point — similar to last year — but Pearson said snowpack on the Plains is nearly nonexistent.

"From a flooding perspective, being below normal at this point in the season is certainly a positive," Pearson said.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the reservoirs along the Missouri River, has said warmer temperatures this winter allowed it to clear out some extra flood-storage space. Officials said they have about 500,000 acre-feet of extra space available for storing floodwater in the reservoirs.

The mild winter also hasn't allowed much thick ice to form on area rivers, so the chances of ice-jam flooding is down. That could change if the temperatures drop

for a prolonged period.

In Nebraska and Iowa, the weather service says the risk for flooding this spring is near or below normal at most places.

Minor flooding is expected along the Missouri River south of Omaha and Council Bluffs, and some flooding is also likely along the North Platte River near North Platte. This is common in lowland areas every spring.

Jeff Zogg, who works in the weather service's Johnston, Iowa, office, said the wet soil and high snowpack that contribute for widespread flooding are missing this year.

S.D. Commission Suspends License Of Seed Company

BY CHET BROKAW
 Associated Press

PIERRE — A seed company's grain buyers license was suspended by a South Dakota commission Friday because officials believe the company has failed to pay farmers \$2.6 million for sunflowers delivered to its operation in Redfield.

The Public Utilities Commission also ordered its staff to conduct a full audit of Anderson Seed Co., which is based in Mentor, Minn. The commission's staff also will investigate to determine what happened and assess the company's current financial condition.

Commission officials said a lawyer for Anderson Seed sent word that the company did not object to the suspension of its license. Unless the company requests a hearing, its license will be revoked in two weeks, officials said.

Jim Mehlhaff, director of the PUC's Grain Warehouse Division, said suspending Anderson Seeds' license will at least protect farmers from further harm by preventing the company from accepting any more sunflowers at its Redfield operation. The division also will explore ways to help farmers who haven't been paid for grain that's already been delivered, but Mehlhaff said no grain can be recovered at the Redfield site because Anderson Seeds doesn't store grain there.

PUC Chairman Chris Nelson said

the commission will do all it can to help farmers recover losses.

"I have great respect for the producers in our state. When I see them being taken advantage of, which is apparently the case here, I'm greatly concerned," Nelson said.

Neither Anderson Seeds owner Ron Anderson nor the company's lawyer took part in Friday's commission meeting. The lawyer did not immediately return a call requesting comment.

Mehlhaff said Legumex Walker of Winnipeg, Manitoba, recently bought some assets of Anderson Seed, but not the Redfield operation.

Mehlhaff said he received complaints in January from farmers who had not been paid for sunflowers they had delivered to Anderson Seed, but those farmers were later paid. After a new round of complaints in February, the company failed to pay farmers, he said.

When Anderson Seed was granted a license in July, its financial records showed a net worth of about \$2.5 million as of September 2010, but it was more than \$11 million in debt by December 2011, Mehlhaff said.

Ron Anderson told commission officials the company was in financial trouble because it lost \$6 million when grain suppliers failed to honor contracts to deliver grain, but Mehlhaff said he does not know whether that is what happened.

Nebraska Court Upholds Man's Loss Of Parental Rights

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A court order taking away a man's parental rights over his son because he twice abused the boy's half brother was appropriate, the Nebraska Supreme Court said in a ruling released Friday.

Court records say a man identified only as Randal R. and his girlfriend had a son, Ryder, in November 2008. Randal's girlfriend already had a son, Crue, who was born in May 2005.

In April 2008, Natasha took Crue to a hospital, where doctors determined his injuries were likely a result of child abuse.

Randal was charged, and he later pleaded no contest to attempted child abuse. He received probation.

In October 2009, Crue again was taken to a hospital for injuries suffered while in Randal's care. Randal was charged and later pleaded no contest to a felony

count of attempted child abuse. He was sentenced to 20 to 48 months in prison, where he remains.

The Lincoln County prosecutor then asked the juvenile court to terminate Randal's parental rights to Ryder, even though Randal had been prosecuted only for abusing Crue.

The Lincoln County court acted after hearing from a clinical psychologist, who said Randal had a dependent personality disorder that required long-term therapy. The psychologist concluded that despite Randal's desire to be a father to Ryder, he was "ill-equipped to manage the child" and leaving Ryder with him put the boy in peril.

Randal appealed, but the state Supreme Court upheld the lower court order, finding that "Randal is an unfit parent" and terminating his parental rights "was in Ryder's best interests."

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