



Gazelles Finish Seventh  
At State Gymnastics • 7

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## Scotland Man Gets Life In Prison

Miller Continues To Proclaim  
Innocence In Son's Death

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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TYNDALL — A Scotland man has received a mandatory life sentence for his second-degree murder conviction in the March 2011 death of his infant son.

Chris A. Miller, 39, received the sentence for the death of four-month-old Jacob Miller at their Scotland home. In addition, Miller was sentenced to 50 years for aggravated assault and 10 years for probation violation, with all sentences ordered to run consecutively.

Circuit Judge Glen Eng issued the sentence Friday at the Bon Homme County courthouse in Tyndall.

In addition, the judge ordered Miller to pay restitution of \$22,794.33 for costs related to the case, \$1,971.46 for Jacob's funeral expenses and all attorneys' fees.

Miller admitted to habitual offender status because of previous convictions, which elevated the aggravated assault from a Class 2 felony to a Class 1 felony.

At Friday's sentencing, Miller remained adamant in maintaining his innocence, denying that he caused his son's death.

"Just because I'm an a\*\*hole, or a hard a\*\*, it doesn't make me a killer," he said.

Miller again proclaimed his innocence later in the proceedings, referring to his relationship with other family members.

"I know I didn't hurt my son. I would never hurt my daughter (Elizabeth), and I slapped my wife (Stacy) once," he said. "Just because a guy is an a\*\*hole doesn't mean he's a murderer."

The murder and assault charges stemmed from a 911 call from the Miller residence in Scotland on March 3, 2011, where Jacob Miller was reported not breathing. Hospital staff notified law enforcement that Jacob was diagnosed with a severe skull fracture and bleeding on the brain.

Chris Miller had allegedly shaken and beaten the infant.

This case was investigated by the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), Bon Homme County sheriff's office and the Scotland police department.

Miller was convicted by a Turner County jury on Jan. 30 of this year. The trial, and Friday's sentencing, ended two years of investigations and court proceedings.

Eng had granted the defense's motion for a change of venue, moving the trial out of Bon Homme County.

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DEREK BARTOS/P&D  
**Eight-year-old Santee Sioux tribal member Tawi Star Comes Out cuts the ribbon Friday at the grand opening ceremonies for the new Ohiya Casino and Resort in Santee, Neb.**

## A New Day For Santee

Sioux Nation Comes Together To Celebrate Grand Opening

BY DEREK BARTOS  
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SANTEE, Neb. — In August 1999, members of the Santee Sioux Nation tribal council departed for a federal courthouse in Omaha, Neb., not knowing when they would return.

They had been placed in contempt of court for failing to comply with an order from the Justice Department to close the reservation's Ohiya Casino, which the tribe had opened to create jobs and economic development.

"I remember that was the day the United States made our children cry on the Santee reservation," casino manager Thelma Thomas said. "Because before they left home, they had to tell their children

and their family members they may not be returning, because they were prepared to go to jail."

The scene was part of an eight-year legal battle between the tribe and state and federal governments in which Santee ultimately emerged victorious.

On Friday afternoon, the Santee Sioux Nation celebrated its past successes and future potential during the grand opening ceremonies for its new Ohiya Casino and Resort.

"We hope this will be the start of many good things, not only for the reservation, but also for the county and the northeast Nebraska region," tribal chairman Roger Trudell said. "Studies have shown the communities surrounding casinos and resorts

CASINO | PAGE 11

## TRUCK AND ROLL



KELLY HERTZ/P&D  
**This truck rolled into the ditch around 11:40 a.m. Friday along 898 Road just east of the Highway 81 and Highway 121 intersection. According to Cedar County (Neb.) Sheriff Larry Koranda, the driver heard a "pop" before losing control of the vehicle. Investigators could not determine any mechanical cause for the mishap, and speed is not believed to have been a factor. A small amount of diesel fuel spilled at the scene, and the Yankton Fire Department helped to clean it up. The load of round bales on the truck remained secured. Koranda said the driver of the truck was not injured.**

## Texting Ban Advances In Pierre

Senate Panel Moves Measure Forward

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE — A man who caused a fatal accident while texting behind the wheel and the widow of the man who died told state lawmakers Friday it's time for South Dakota to join the other 39 states that have banned texting while driving.

Justin Iburg of Mitchell said he was texting in September 2010 when he rammed into other vehicles stopped in a construction zone. Iburg, who was 20 at the time of the crash and later convicted of reckless driving, showed a Senate committee a slideshow of photos of the accident scene and of the victim, Jon Christensen.

Christensen's widow, Janean, said her 44-year-old husband was killed while riding his motorcycle home after the family ate at a restaurant to celebrate their son's 13th birthday. She cried as she said her husband would still be alive if Iburg had been paying attention to the road instead of his phone.

"Telling my children that their dad was gone was one of the hardest things I've ever had



Vehle

to do," said Christensen, who also lives in Mitchell. "It is time something is done so other families won't have to go through the pain."

Iburg, who gives presentations about the

crash to young people as part of his criminal sentence, added: "On that day, so many lives were changed. ... It's not worth dying for. Don't let this be you."

The Senate Transportation Committee heeded the message, voting 5-2 to endorse a proposed texting ban similar to measures that have been repeatedly rejected in recent years. The bill next goes to the full Senate.

Supporters hope lawmakers will look more favorably on the idea now because four South Dakota cities in the past year have imposed their own bans on texting while driving. Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia have already banned texting behind the wheel.

TEXTING | PAGE 2

## Local Man Inducted Into Hall Of Fame

BY ANDREW ATWAL  
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After years of volunteering for a local school, Larry Hames was recently recognized with a big honor.

The Sacred Heart School recently inducted Hames into its Hall of Fame. The award was presented to him last month.

A ceremony was held during the 5:30 p.m. mass at St. Benedict's on Jan. 26, while an additional presentation for Hames was held at the 11 a.m. mass on Jan. 27 at Sacred Heart.

"I was very surprised about getting the honor, there's no question about that," he

said. "However, I really appreciate getting the recognition."

Hames said he believes there is a referral process for the award where people can nominate individuals. He said there was a nomination put forth on his behalf that cited some of the things he's done for the school over the past several years.

"I helped out when the school addition was built at St. Benedict's, I acted as a liaison between the school board and the construction company," Hames said. "I also do a lot of computer maintenance for the churches and schools. I helped set up all of the computer networks in Sacred Heart Elementary, and work with the mid-

dle school networks as well."

In addition to helping out with the computer networks, he also manages the investment certificate program for Sacred Heart and St. Benedict's. The program is used to manage the schools debt on the construction they had.

All of the work Hames does for the district is volunteer-based.

Hames is retired and said he is doing this work not for financial gain, but to help pass his time.

"Overall, with the investment certi-



SUBMITTED PHOTO  
**Larry Hames (right), stands with his wife Irene, after he was inducted into the Sacred Heart School Hall of Fame last month.**

VOLUNTEER | PAGE 2

### Three Board Of Ed. Members Reappointed

PIERRE (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard has reappointed three people whose terms were expiring on the South Dakota Board of Education.

The terms of Kelly Duncan of Vermillion, Stacy Phelps of Rapid City and Julie Mathiesen of Sturgis were extended on the nine-member board for another four years.

Duncan has been a member of the board since 1996. Phelps was first appointed to the group by Gov. Mike Rounds in 2008.

Mathiesen is the newest member of the board. She was initially appointed in 2011.

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