



Sunny But Awfully Cold

9 a.m.: **6** | 3 p.m.: **11** | DETAILS: PAGE 2



PLAY BALL! Lancers
Open Baseball Season
With Losses To UND • **7**

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**S.D. Girls Swing Into
Postseason Play • 7**

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Johanns Won't Run In '14

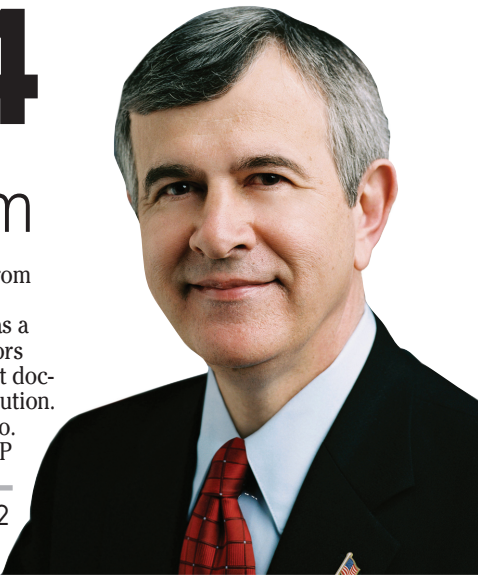
Nebraska Republican Leaving The U.S. Senate After One Term

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns of Nebraska announced Monday that he will not seek re-election in 2014, saying he wants a "quieter time" to focus on his family following a busy political career that included stints as governor and President George W. Bush's agriculture secretary. The Nebraska Republican announced that he was retiring from the Senate after one term. He said he and his wife, Stephanie, had decided that the time had come to end a pub-

lic career that has spanned more than half of his life. In an interview, Johanns said he and his wife — a former state lawmaker — had endured a combined 16 primary and general-election campaigns together. They held eight different offices over the course of 32 years. "That's enough," Johanns said. "We just felt, both Steph and I, that it was time. That's really what we talked most about. We always said we'd know when it was time. And it was time." Johanns, 62, joined the U.S. Senate in 2009 and did not appear to face any re-election threat. He served as agriculture

secretary under Bush and was Nebraska's governor from 1999 to 2005. Johanns faced a health scare during his first year as a senator, undergoing surgery in March 2009 after doctors found a spot on his left lung. No cancer was found, but doctors removed the lower left lobe of his lung as a precaution. Johanns was a smoker but quit more than 20 years ago. His announcement came as a surprise to many GOP



JOHANNIS | PAGE 12



Kelly Hertz/P&D
Kristie VerMum, news anchor at television station KTIV in Sioux City, Iowa, was the featured speaker at the fifth annual Women of Distinction luncheon, held Monday at the Roncalli Center on the campus of Mount Marty College in Yankton. VerMum, a native of Harrisburg, spoke of the life lessons that she learned while growing up in South Dakota and that she's acquired during her journalism career. To see or purchase images from this event, visit spotted.yankton.net.

A Distinctive Honor

O'Connell, Pugh Win Annual Awards For Service

BY ANDREW ATWAL
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Women from Yankton were honored for their service to the community during the annual "Women of Distinction" luncheon held at Mount Marty College on Monday. The program featured a keynote speech from Kristie VerMum, who was born in South Dakota and now anchors television newscasts at KTIV in Sioux City for 17 years. VerMum spoke about the life lessons that people can take from a roll of South Dakota sod. "The experiences we have, both good and bad, help shape who we are," she said. "A roll of sod on the side of the road was a big deal for my family growing up. One day my brother wanted to go back and get the roll he saw on the road but my dad already got it. This made me realize that simple things bring joy to families." She connected this to volunteering, telling the audience at the Roncalli Center, that our actions can be simple but they can make a difference in the community. "This event is great because it recognizes people that make a difference in their community," she said. "All of the women here today have great talents and give up their time to the community. We need more people like that across the country."



Kelly Hertz/P&D
Judi O'Connell, left, and Jane Pugh were honored with "Woman of Distinction" awards during an annual luncheon held at Mount Marty College's Roncalli Center.

Some of the lessons that VerMum spoke about including finding humor in your life, understanding the challenges other people might face in the future and to love the life you are living. "Each of us has a life and a story to tell," she said. "You'll never know how many lives you've had an impact on, both positively and negatively." Their were 10 nominees this year for the Women of Distinction awards, including two who were nominated in

both the Outstanding Community Service and Outstanding Professional categories. Nominees in the outstanding professional category were Joan Neubauer, Judi O'Connell, Jane Pugh and Sister Margo Tschetter. Nominees for the outstanding community service award were Mary Fiedler, Dagmar Hoxsie,

WOMEN | PAGE 9

'R2D2' Joins Forces With Yankton Police

Remote-Control Robot Acquired From DOD Through Program

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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R2D2 has found a home in Yankton, and the police department believes it will make officers' jobs safer. This isn't the mechanical character of "Star Wars" fame. Instead, it's a remote-controlled robot equipped with a camera that can be sent into potentially dangerous environments to show officers what lies ahead. Situations where it could be of use include to scope out whether a meth lab, bomb or armed suspect is in a structure. "We're not going to have this robot out every day. But when we need it, it's going to be important that we have it," Yankton Police Chief Brian Paulsen said. "It's going to fill a void that we had."



Nathan Johnson/P&D
Yankton Police Chief Brian Paulsen operates a new remote-controlled robot equipped with a camera that can be sent into potentially dangerous environments. The device was obtained recently through a Department of Defense program.

Added Lt. Michael Burgeson, "The bottom line about this is, it's about saving lives. I don't care if it's our guys, or law enforcement from Vermillion or Bon Homme County. That's what R2D2 is here for." Paulsen estimates the robot and supporting equipment is worth more than \$12,000. However, the department was able to obtain it for \$200 — the cost of shipping it from Battle Creek, Mich., a couple weeks ago. The acquisition, which would have otherwise been out of the price range of the local police force, was made pos-

ROBOT | PAGE 9

Study Weighs Conversion Of Grassland To Crops

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — A new study documents a loss of 1.3 million acres of grassland over a five-year period in the Western Corn Belt — a loss not seen since the 1920s and 1930s. The research by Christopher Wright and Michael Wimberly of the Geographic Information Science Center of Excellence at South Dakota State University said a recent doubling in commodity prices has created incentives for landowners in South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa to convert grassland to corn and soybean cropping. "Historically, comparable grassland conversion rates have not been seen in the Corn Belt since the 1920s and 1930s, the era of rapid mechanization of US agriculture," the authors wrote.

The study is published in Tuesday's edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. It found that corn and soy production has expanded onto marginal lands with high potential for erosion and drought. The authors compared the land use change rate in the Western Corn Belt to the deforestation of Brazil, Malaysia, and Indonesia, but Wright said it's over a much smaller area. "And we're not talking about a pristine landscape like a Brazilian rainforest," Wright said. The researchers say that high corn and soybean prices, prompted largely by demand for biofuel feedstocks, are driving the change. Growers groups say the increased demand for their crops is also spurred by the

STUDY | PAGE 12

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Yankton's 2012 Citizens of the Year

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