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## Johnson's Son For Senate?

### Democrats Eye Keeping Seat In Family In 2014

BY THOMAS BEAUMONT

Although South Dakota Sen. Tim Johnson has not said whether he intends to seek re-election 2014, some Democrats are discussing a way of keeping his seat in the family—and in Democratic hands—if he decides not to run.

The activists are promoting the idea of Johnson's son, Brendan, who is U.S. attorney, seeking the nomination if the senator decides to retire after his third term ends.

Lingering effects from a 2006 brain hemorrhage have intensified questions about the senator's plans. He chairs

the Senate Banking Committee, but his speech and his physical stamina remain impaired.

Johnson, 66, has \$1.2 million in his campaign account to use if he chooses to run. Still, he would face a tough race, with the state having shifted toward the Republican Party in recent years. Senate aides to Johnson declined to comment on Johnson's future.

Some Democrats believe Brendan Johnson would give the party a chance to hold the seat.

"Brendan is one who walks into the room and works it



B. Johnson

well," said Steve Dick, a Sioux Falls Democrat and veteran aide to former South Dakota Sen. Tom Daschle. "He's positioning himself. That's what people are talking about."

In a telephone interview, Brendan Johnson declined to comment, citing his federal post. Johnson, 37, has been U.S. attorney since 2009.

"One of the promises I made to myself when I took the position was I wasn't going to publicly discuss politics," he said.

Other Democrats mentioned as possible candidates include Stephanie Herseht Sandlin, a former U.S. House member. She has not ruled out a Senate bid.

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### INSIDE TODAY



USA Weekend

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## Midwest Under Blanket Of Snow

BY JIM SALTER

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Powdery snow, up to a foot and a half in some places, bombarded much of the nation's mid-section Thursday, impeding travel and shutting down airports, schools and state legislatures.

The widespread winter storm system swirled to the north and east Thursday night, its snow, sleet and freezing rain prompting winter storm warnings in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Illinois.

Corey Mead, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla., said the winter storm would be centered in the upper Midwest by Friday morning.

"Even across Kansas, the snowfall rates should continue to taper off through the evening," Mead said.

The system left behind impressive snow accumulations, especially in western Kansas, where 17 inches fell in Hays.

Several accidents and two deaths were blamed on icy and slushy roadways; two people died in crashes Wednesday. Most schools in Kansas and Missouri, and many in neighboring states, were closed Thursday and legislatures shut down in Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Nebraska and Iowa.

National Weather Service meteorologist Scott Truett said it was "pouring snow" earlier Thursday, with it falling at a rate of 2 inches per hour or more in some spots.

Topeka, Kan., got 3 inches of snow in a 30-minute period, leaving medical center worker Jennifer Carlock to dread the drive home.

"It came on fast," Carlock said as she shoveled around her car. "We're going to test out traction control on the way home."

Snow totals passed the foot mark in many places: the Kansas cities of Hutchinson, Macksville and Hanston all saw 14 inches, and Wichita, Kan., had 13 inches. A few places in far northern Oklahoma saw between 10 to 13 1/2 inches of snow. Missouri's biggest snow total was 10 inches, shared by the Kansas City metropolitan area, Rockport in the north-

SNOW | PAGE 13A



KELLY HERTZP&D

Yankton is set to host the South Dakota State JV Girls Hockey Tournament, which opens today (Friday) at the Kiwanis 4-H Ice Center. An army of parents and volunteers are helping the Yankton Area Hockey Association with the tournament, including, from left: Michelle Lyman, Amy Johnson, Mike Van Winkle, Jamie Van Winkle, Christy Westerman and Norma Pokorny.

## 'A Nice Path' To Follow

### Hockey Tourney Organizers Take Advantage Of Time, Experience

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of the Press & Dakotan's monthly series spotlighting occupations, tasks and duties in our coverage area.

BY DEREK BARTOS

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When preparing for a state hockey tournament, a little bit of extra time can make all the difference.

For the second consecutive year, Yankton is hosting the South Dakota Amateur Hockey Association Girls JV State Tournament. The tournament begins today (Friday) and runs through Sunday at the Kiwanis 4-H Ice Center.

"We're really excited to be hosting again," said tournament coordinator Jamie Van Winkle. "It's a pretty big honor for us."



ON THE JOB

issues at the planned site in Huron forced a change in venue.

However, event organizers got off to a better start this year after volunteering much earlier to host the tournament.

"We've been working on it since a little before Christmas, so we have a little more time than we did the year before," Van Winkle said. "It definitely makes things easier."

In addition to having more time to prepare this year, organizers have also been aided by the experience of previously hosting the event, she said.

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## Experts: Little Hope For Drought Relief In Near Future

BY NATHAN JOHNSON

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Those hoping for major drought relief in the near future weren't given much reason for optimism by climate experts Thursday.

"The winter has brought wetter and cooler conditions to the eastern part of the central region (of the United States), while drier and warmer-than-normal conditions have persisted in the western portion of the region," said Wendy Ryan of the Colorado State Climate Office during the monthly Midwest and Great Plains Drought Impact and Outlook webinar. "Drought conditions are expected to persist in the western part of the central region."

The western portion of that region includes Nebraska and South Dakota.

According to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor released Thursday, much of Nebraska and the southern portion of South Dakota remained in exceptional drought. All regions of the two states were experiencing some level of drought.

Ryan said about 13 percent of the central region of the country is experiencing that exceptional drought.

"You only experience (exceptional drought) once or twice every 100 years," she stated. "You see much of Nebraska, South Dakota, eastern Wyoming, eastern

DROUGHT | PAGE 13A

## MMC Program Outlines Papal Election Process

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF

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The first papal resignation in more than 600 years has raised a number of questions, but the cardinals who will gather at the Vatican will follow a very specific procedure in selecting the next pope, according to a Mount Marty College professor.

Helen Ciernick, co-chair of the Religious Studies Department, outlined "How The Pope Is Elected" during a Thursday night program on the MMC campus.

Paul Anders, co-chair of the department, and James Simmons, associate professor of English, were scheduled to speak later in the program.

The papal election procedure follows the code of canon — or church — law, Ciernick said. While the process remains secret from the outside world, it involves prayer and consultation, she said.

"It's not a bunch of men, sitting around smoking cigars and being involved in back-room politics," she said.

However, she acknowledged that the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, effective Feb. 28, has surprised many people.

"There were even questions about the word to describe it," she said. "Is he abdicating, resigning or renouncing? And can he do it? Can he resign?"

The answer is, yes, and it has been done

in earlier periods of the Roman Catholic Church, Ciernick said. In fact, a number of observers weren't surprised at Pope Benedict's resignation, she said.

"He resigned because he didn't feel he could carry out his office as he should," she said. "He felt it was best for the church if he resigned."

Other popes considered their office a lifetime calling and remained as pontiff until death, she said.

Ciernick outlined the process, including changes instituted under the late Pope John Paul II.

POPE | PAGE 8A



Helen Ciernick, co-chair of the Mount Marty College religious studies department, outlines "How The Pope Is Elected" during Thursday night's program on the MMC campus. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)

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