



Meet Yankton's 2012 Citizens Of The Year...  
**Dr. Brooks & Vi Ranney**  
Sunday, March 3 • 1:30PM  
Yankton Elks Lodge  
A Special Program Begins at 2pm  
PRESS&DAKOTAN

YANKTON DAILY  
**PRESS & DAKOTAN**



USD Facilities Plan  
Signed By Gov.  
Daugaard ■ **8**

VOLUME 138  
NUMBER 259

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | **14 PAGES** | www.yankton.net

75¢  
8 38894 0002 4



NATHAN JOHNSON/P&D  
**Barb Rohde, president of the Historic Downtown Yankton Association, spoke Tuesday at the organization's annual meeting.**

## Local Leaders Offer Praise, Guidance To HDYA Stockholders

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

What is Historic Downtown Yankton? That was the question City Manager Amy Nelson posed to members of the Historic Downtown Yankton Association (HDYA) Tuesday during its annual meeting held at Ben's.

"I think it is an entertainment district. Certainly, that was my introduction to the downtown," she said. "It's a retail district. You have some real unique opportunities there. It's a recreational district, and it's also a cultural/historic district. Those are some of the elements that make downtown Yankton what it is."

Still, Nelson encouraged HDYA members to think about why it is called Historic Downtown Yankton.



Nelson

"Is it historic because of the types of buildings you have?" she asked. "Is it historic because of the people that are here? What is it that makes it historic, and what is the organization doing to capitalize on that identity? Have you considered design guidelines that are in keeping with the historic flavor of your downtown? Do you have a historic walking tour, where I can go and learn about the downtown and the buildings and history?"

Nelson, along with Mayor Nancy Wernande, were the guest speakers at the event. The HDYA is a coalition of property owners, business owners and business employees committed to enhancing the quality of life and business in downtown Yankton.

The city manager said she considers

HDYA | PAGE 3

# S.D. Texting Ban Killed

## Despite Emotional Testimony, Panel Rejects Measure

BY CHET BROKAW AND AMBER HUNT  
Associated Press

PIERRE — A South Dakota legislative committee has killed a bill that would have banned texting while driving statewide, despite sometimes-tearful testimony from people whose loved ones have been killed in texting-related wrecks.

The bill was rejected Wednesday by the House Judiciary Committee. Police chiefs, insurance lobbyists,

a grief-stricken widow and the man who killed her husband all testified in support of the ban. No one testified against the bill, which previously had passed the Senate.

Though similar bills have failed in past legislative sessions, backers had hoped this year would be different. Four South Dakota cities — including Sioux Falls, its largest — have instituted texting bans in recent months.

But committee members cited a study by the

Governors Highway Safety Association that said it isn't clear whether texting bans have lowered crash rates in the 39 states that have them. The uncertainty of the ban's effectiveness sealed its fate.

"There are other ways to influence our culture, to teach people that texting while driving is not socially accepted," said Rep. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids.

The bill's main sponsor, Sen. Mike Vehle, R-Mitchell, said he's disappointed the bill was killed after no one testified against it in both the Senate and House commit-

TEXTING | PAGE 14

## 'GREEN EGGS' AND HATS



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

**Yankton Community Library employee Dana Yanez-Soria takes a fashion cue from the Cat in the Hat while she reads Dr. Seuss's classic "Green Eggs and Ham" to kids during Story Time Wednesday. This week, the library has been celebrating the birth of Theodore Seuss Geisel — a.k.a. Dr. Seuss — on March 2, 1904, by offering several activities tied to his books. Library staffers have also been donning "Cat in the Hat" headgear to commemorate the birthday.**

# Yankton Hosting State Debate Meet

## Two-Day Tournament Begins Friday At SAC

BY ANDREW ATWAL  
andrew.atwal@yankton.net

Schools from around the state will be traveling to Yankton on Friday and Saturday to participate in the South Dakota State Debate Tournament, being held at Yankton High School (YHS).

There will be approximately 18 schools in Yankton for the tournament, including most AA schools with a debate team, and some A schools, such as Vermillion,

Harrisburg and Spearfish.

Local preparations for the tournament began around Jan. 1 with coordinators getting in touch with people to help with things needed for judges and making sure all rooms and backup rooms were read for the event.

The tournament will have several categories, including the group debate categories of policy, Lincoln-Douglas and the public forum debate. The individual events include original oratory, international

extemporaneous and United States extemporaneous.

"The policy debate is an issue of policy. This year, students will debate whether the federal government should increase its investment in transportation infrastructure," said Leo Kallis, YHS' debate team coach. "Students have the resolution and work on it all year."

The policy debate is the longest of the three group categories, lasting about 90 minutes.

The public forum debate is shorter,

DEBATE | PAGE 14

# Drought's Impact Assessed By USD Prof

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON  
P&D Correspondent

VERMILLION — "Drought is a leading economic loss for the United States," said Dr. Mark R. Sweeney, a member of the Earth Sciences Department at University of South Dakota, during a talk last week at the W.H. Over Museum in Vermillion.

He said that the drought-loss estimate so far is \$50 billion due to crop loss, forest fires, lost recreation, etc.

Sweeney's talk confined itself to the earth science perspective of the drought, looking at its causes and its implications relating to water. He also touched on the governmental aspect of coping with such situations.

"No cohesive national policy is in place to deal with drought," he noted. "We don't react until drought is severe."

The Palmer Drought Severity Scale (PDSI) is used in the United States to measure drought severity, according to Sweeney. The scale uses temperature and

precipitation data from the National Climatic Data Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that has been collected since 1895.

According to PDSI data on its "2012 Precipitation Ranks for Major River Basins in the Contiguous U. S." chart, the Missouri River Basin's precipitation for 2012 ranked "third driest" in 118 years of recorded data.

Sweeney pointed out that the current drought actually began in 2011. That summer, he collected data in the Texas Panhandle as that state experienced drought.

By July 2012, he said that 62 percent of the lower 48 states were in drought. That figure declined slightly to 59 percent by January of this year.

The drought monitor currently shows the Yankton area in the "exceptional," or highest, category of drought intensity.

DROUGHT | PAGE 14



PHOTO: MARK SWEENEY/USD  
**Dr. Mark Sweeney collected data in 2011 in Lubbock, Texas, during the drought that currently impacts South Dakota. "The panhandle of Texas was in the midst of exceptional drought conditions," said Sweeney. "The soil is very sandy and susceptible to wind erosion."**

## Sequestration Agencies Bracing For Impact

### S.D.Is At Risk For The Most Exposure To Sequester

BY DEREK BARTOS  
derek.bartos@yankton.net

With sequestration set to go into effect Friday barring action from Congress, agencies across the nation that rely on federal spending are bracing for its impact.

The deep, automatic cuts in government spending amount to \$85 billion. According to the Pew Center on the States, South Dakota is at risk for the most exposure to the sequester, as 10.3 percent of the state's revenue this year would be subject to the cuts. The next highest states are Illinois and Georgia at 8.5 percent.

Numerous agencies in the Yankton area would feel the effects of the spending cuts. While some groups know specifically how their operations would be affected, others are awaiting word for more concrete plans.

Those that could be impacted by sequestration include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The Missouri National Recreational River (MNRR) headquartered in Yankton would see \$43,025 in cuts, according to Steve Mietz, MNRR superintendent.

This would reduce the seasonal staff by two positions. Those positions have not been filled yet, so no layoffs are currently necessary, Mietz said.

With the smaller staff, the MNRR will see a reduction of 342 interpretation programs, meaning roughly 2,800 people won't receive talks from park rangers this season, he said. The park would also eliminate its summer reading program held at libraries, impacting approximately 300 students.

Mietz said that a smaller staff would also lead to less maintenance at park-owned facilities.

"There may be more garbage and more law enforcement issues because we won't have people there," he said. "Bathroom cleaning will be reduced to monthly at best."

Mietz added that the MNRR also would reduce or eliminate its program to fight salt cedar, an invasive plant, as well reduce its monitoring of threatened and endangered species, which could greatly set back scientific research.

#### NATIONAL GUARD

According to the sequester fact sheet released by the White House, approximately 1,000 civilian Department of Defense employees would be furloughed in South Dakota, with Army base operation funding cut by about \$900,000 in the state.

No full-time in employees in the South Dakota National Guard (SDNG) from Yankton and Vermillion would be affected by

SEQUESTER | PAGE 14