

Officials In Regional Oil Industry Stress Resiliency

By The Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — A recent slide in oil prices is leading to fewer jobs in the western North Dakota oil patch, but officials there and in northwestern South Dakota say the regional industry is resilient and will ride out the slump.

Openings posted at the Job Service North Dakota office in Williston have fallen from about 4,500 before the price drop to about 1,900 now, but office Manager Cindy Sanford estimates her office's postings represent fewer than half of the actual jobs available.

"There are some layoffs yes, we are seeing that," she told the Williston Herald. "But there are also jobs."

The need for skilled labor remains high, and qualified workers are quickly finding new employment, Sanford said.

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CINDY SANFORD

"A guy came in today who had been laid off, and he got a new job for \$2 more an hour," she said.

One reason for the continued demand for workers is that businesses continue coming into the region, according to Sanford. One that registered last month to do business in the state told her "this is still the land of opportunity," she said. "We're coming up, we'll be here in November, and we need 35 people."

The effects of North Dakota's oil boom have spread into northwestern South Dakota, with some companies locating there and some workers living there and commuting to the western North Dakota oil fields.

Executives at a Belle Fourche energy conference organized last week by the South Dakota State University Extension said they expect that impact to continue, the *Rapid City Journal* reported.

Bob Sieve, manager of Permian Tank in Belle Fourche, said his company has had to lay off seven employees in the past two weeks but is still planning to double the size of its plant and eventually hire more workers.

"I think it's just going to be delayed slightly," he said.

Lennox

Mood Is Somber After Fatal Shooting

LENNOX (AP) — The mood in the community of Lennox is somber and likely will remain that way for a while, as residents prepare for the funeral of a man killed in a workplace shooting.

The funeral for Jon Richter, 45, is scheduled for Friday afternoon at Chancellor Reformed Church, according to Dindot-Klusmann Funeral Home. Visitation at the church begins at noon Thursday, with the family present from 5-8 p.m.

Truck driver Jeffrey DeZeeuw, of Sioux Falls, got into an argument over a delivery last Thursday with Richter, a supervisor at a Sioux Steel Co. location known as ProTec, authorities said. DeZeeuw later returned, fatally shot Richter, wounded worker Kathy Steever and injured another employee, Brian Roesler, who confronted DeZeeuw and is credited with likely preventing more injuries or deaths. DeZeeuw then killed himself.

"Those individuals out there were members of our community, and being a small community, everybody knows everybody," Mayor Orv Wiebers told the *Argus Leader* newspaper.

People in small towns have a trusting nature, and Lennox is in "grieving mode," City Finance Officer Jerry Jones said.

"Honestly, in your smaller community, we're an easier candidate because we don't have (big-city) security," he said. "But who'd have ever even imagined anything like this happening?"

The shooting has shaken even the newest members of the community. Ahmed Algattan came to Lennox last fall as a foreign exchange student from Kuwait. The 16-year-old high school junior did not immediately contact his parents about the shooting.

"I don't want my mom to be worried," he said, adding that he would tell her "someday."

Wiebers said Lennox is a resilient community and will bounce back, but for now residents are still coming to grips with what happened.

"It's a sad situation," retiree and substitute teacher John Kirchner said.

2 Men Injured While Working On Motorcycle

NORTH PLATTE, Neb. (AP) — Two men have been injured in an explosion and fire touched off when gasoline fumes ignited in a North Platte garage.

Authorities say firefighters from all three North Platte stations were sent to the scene on Saturday afternoon. Fire marshal George Lewis says the two were working on a motorcycle fuel line or fuel filter in the detached garage when the gas fumes were set off by a propane heater.

Both men were taken to Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in Lincoln, where they were listed in critical condition on Monday. They were identified as Brent Farley and his son, Nathaniel.

Nebraska

Director Teaching In China Wants Leave From District

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Board members for a natural resources district are considering action on a colleague who wants to remain on the board despite being out of the country until June, teaching in China.

Steve Larrick represents west Lincoln on the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District board and, running unopposed, in November won a third four-year term. He's asked his colleagues on the board to excuse his absences until June, according to the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

The board has been wrestling with the request, said general manager Glenn Johnson, because state law doesn't allow the board to grant a sabbatical or extended leave.

The laws governing the districts say that if a director has more than two consecutive unexcused absences from monthly meetings, a

board can declare the seat vacant. But before a board can do so, it must hold a public hearing to give the director a chance to explain his or her absences.

The board granted Larrick excused absences for its October and November meetings but not for December and January. If the board at Wednesday's meeting were to deny Larrick an excused absence for February, that would kick in the public hearing process.

A hearing probably would be held on March 18, and Larrick could participate via video conference.

"He does want to keep on serving," said Johnson, who has been communicating with Larrick via email.

The resources district includes most of Lancaster and Cass counties and smaller parts of four other counties.

Senate Democrats In Iowa To Introduce Medical Marijuana Bill

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Certain Iowa businesses would be allowed to produce and distribute medical marijuana under legislation Senate Democrats say they will introduce in an effort to expand the availability of cannabis for Iowa patients.

Sen. Joe Bolkom of Iowa City told The Associated Press on Monday that Senate Democrats would bring forward the legislation this session. His comments came after two Senate committees earlier in the day heard from a group of Iowa residents who described difficulties in trying to obtain medical marijuana to treat personal or family illnesses.

Republican Gov. Terry Branstad signed a bill into law last year that allows for the use of oil derived from mari-

juana to treat chronic epilepsy. But the law didn't provide any way for people to make or distribute the extract in Iowa, and it prohibits any other form of medical marijuana.

The proposed legislation would create a program that monitors the production and distribution of medical marijuana in other states, according to Bolkom.

The legislation is also similar to a measure last session that would have allowed other types of medical marijuana but failed to garner enough support. Bolkom said that he expects resistance this year in the Republican-controlled House but that last year's law shows that there's a willingness among lawmakers to help

residents who are sick.

Branstad said at a press conference earlier Monday that he doesn't know if additional legislation on medical marijuana will pass this session. He said lawmakers must consider the unintended consequences of expanding its use in Iowa.

However, Branstad did say he was open to working with officials in Illinois to let Iowa residents travel there to access medical marijuana. Illinois lawmakers recently passed legislation for a pilot program that allows companies to manufacture and distribute medical marijuana in the state.

Branstad's spokesman said the governor needs to discuss the issue further with Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner.

Pigs

From Page 1

farm's manure management practices posed an "imminent and substantial endangerment" to the environment and to thousands relying on well water. And Des Moines' water utility has recently filed a notice of intent to sue farmers in three counties populated by 1.2 million pigs and a million turkeys, as the water it sources from two central Iowa rivers must be run through a costly system to strip out nitrates.

About 68 percent of the nation's lakes, reservoirs and ponds and more than half of its rivers and streams are impaired, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, whose reports show the main culprit is agriculture.

"Pork is cheap and cheap to produce in large factories because they don't pay for

cleaning up the Des Moines water supply and they don't pay for the asthma neighbors get, they don't pay for polluting downstream water that used to be potable and they don't pay for the loss of property values," said Steve Wing, a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill epidemiologist.

The hog industry's national shift from small family farms to large-scale farms is dramatic — from more than 200,000 in the early 1990s to just over 21,600 in 2012. A driving force behind some of the farms is Murphy-Brown LLC, which is part of China-based WH Group — the world's largest pork producer. WH Group aims to feed China's appetite for meat with cheaper hogs from the U.S., according to lawsuits.

Advocates of locally grown food and animal-rights and environmental activists are behind many of the suits, but in some cases, farmers are going after farm-

ers. Barb Kalbach has fought against the construction of huge hog operations in Iowa, where pork is a \$7 billion industry and there are seven times more hogs than humans. "I have in the back of my mind this idea that we have thousands of miles of clean water, which is a gift in this state and we just throw manure in it," the 61-year-old crop farmer said.

Hog farmer Matt Schuiteman says farmers care about the environment and are willing to work on improvements that will minimize impacts, but doesn't think lawsuits are the best course of action. "Maybe we can all get to where we want to be together instead of drawing the battle lines and forcing the issue," the 40-year-old from Sioux Center, Iowa, said.

In North Carolina, 10 million hogs produce as much fecal waste in a day as 100 million people, and Duplin County is the nation's top county for hog production, according to the U.S. Agriculture Department.

Man Who Hit Mom Twice With SUV Sought

BELLEVUE, Neb. (AP) — Police are searching for a 32-year-old man who they say twice struck his mother with an SUV in an attempt to evade an officer.

A Bellevue police spokeswoman says an officer on Saturday afternoon spoke briefly with Anthony M. Flud's mother outside a home.

Flud was sought on felony arrest warrants after being charged in late December with operating a vehicle to avoid arrest and felony theft.

The spokesman says that while the officer and the mother were talking, Flud was inside a vehicle and hit his mother in the driveway. Flud struck his mother a second time and the officer's patrol car before driving away.

Police followed Flud's vehicle but called it off for safety reasons.

Flud's mother was taken to a hospital for treatment.

SD Man Sentenced In Assault Case

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota man accused of using metal crutches and wooden clubs to assault a victim has been sentenced.

U.S. District Judge Roberto Lange has sentenced 23-year-old Lawrence Mexican to 3 1/2 years in prison. The Eagle Butte man earlier pleaded guilty to assault with a dangerous weapon.

Federal prosecutors say Mexican and two other people intentionally harmed the victim in July 2014 during an incident in Eagle Butte.

Mexican has been turned over to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

Man Who Shipped Drugs Sentenced

PIERRE (AP) — A Washington state man who authorities say shipped high-grade marijuana across the country has been sentenced in South Dakota.

Forty-seven-year-old Bruce Cole recently pleaded guilty in federal court in South Dakota to a drug conspiracy charge and was sentenced to five years in custody. U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says the sentence will run at the same time as sentences imposed in federal court in Nevada and in state court in New Hampshire.

Johnson says South Dakota authorities in May 2009 intercepted a vehicle belonging to Cole that contained marijuana, heroin and two guns.

Cole will be on supervised release for two years following his prison time.

Online Hunter Education Course OK'd

PIERRE (AP) — Young South Dakotans can now go online to finish much of the state's hunter safety certification course.

The Game, Fish and Parks Department approved the new HuntSAFE program as an alternative to in-person classroom instruction. The online part of the course costs \$15, while the classroom instruction is free.

After passing the online test, students must participate in the required, in-person HuntSAFE field day, which takes about four to six hours and includes a written final exam.

Hunter education is recommended for all hunters, but South Dakota law requires anyone younger than 16 to finish a hunter education course. Students must be at least 11 years old.

The online portion of the test is available at <http://www.hunter-ed.com/southdakota>.

Bald Eagle Awareness Week Declared

PIERRE (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed the last week of February as Bald Eagle Awareness Week in South Dakota.

Various events have been scheduled between Feb. 23 and 28 that will allow individuals across the state to learn more about bald eagles and other birds of prey.

Educators from the Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota will host an event featuring live birds of prey on Feb. 26 at the Outdoor Campus of the Game, Fish and Parks Department in Sioux Falls. The Outdoor Campus in Rapid City will also host a free raptor-themed event, which is planned for Feb. 28.

Bald Eagle Awareness Week is an annual event sponsored by conservation and outdoor recreation organizations, merchants and other conservation agencies.

Sioux Falls Casino Robbed At Gunpoint

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Sioux Falls police are investigating a weekend robbery at a casino.

Authorities say a male armed with a handgun robbed The Club shortly before 2 a.m. Sunday and fled with an undisclosed amount of money.

No one was hurt.

Treated, liquefied manure and urine is pumped to large sprinkler systems and flung on fields for fertilizer. The resulting odor is a daily drag for Richard Brown, whose home is nearly surrounded by fields that soak up hog effluent. Brown is among the roughly 500 people in who've joined the lawsuits against Murphy-Brown, alleging that the farms deprive them of enjoying their property.

Murphy-Brown encourages residents to raise concerns about operations, but only a handful do in a given

year, the company said in a statement.

The choice, says Iowa State University economist Catherine Kling, will come down to consumers: "We don't know how to produce food and fuel from this incredibly rich land without having nitrogen and nutrient pollution, so society has to figure out what balance it wants."

Associated Press writer Emery P. Dalesio in Raleigh, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

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