

S.D. Stores Targets Of Fake-Drug Busts

DEADWOOD (AP) — Authorities have busted two businesses in Rapid City and one in Deadwood for allegedly selling synthetic marijuana and other products that mimic the effects of illegal drugs.

Attorney General Marty Jackley says warrants were served on Classified Hookah and Ifrits Hookah Lounge in Rapid City and Pam's Purple Door in Deadwood.

Deadwood police say the raid on Pam's Purple Door resulted in the seizure of more than \$12,000 in cash and thousands of packages of synthetic marijuana and stimulants. Chief Kelly Fuller says officers have been monitoring the store for years.

S.D. Tribal Official Hails Keystone XL Decision

ROSEBUD (AP) — Tribal officials in South Dakota are coming out in support of President Barack Obama's decision to temporarily halt the planned Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Rosebud Sioux Tribe President Rodney Bordeaux has spoken against the \$7 billion pipeline before, saying he fears damage to cultural sites and water resources. He calls Obama's move "a tremendous victory for tribal nations."

Obama said there wasn't enough time for a fair review of the project. His move blocks the pipeline but doesn't necessarily kill it. Bordeaux says "we have won a battle but the war has yet to be won."

Union Pacific Plans \$1B In Upgrades In Neb.

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Union Pacific said Friday it plans to invest \$1 billion in railroad projects in Nebraska over the next several years to upgrade the capacity of its network.

Jim Young, the CEO of Union Pacific Corp., said he expects the investments to help create at least 1,000 jobs in Nebraska. The company plans to invest the money over about seven years, but the projects could be accelerated if the economy improves quicker than expected.

"We are renewing our commitment to the state," said Young, whose company has been based in Omaha for 150 years.

Union Pacific Railroad can receive as much \$100 million in state tax breaks in exchange for making the investments.

State Tax Commissioner Doug Ewald said Nebraska's incentive program allows companies to recover as much as 10 percent of their investment if they meet job creation criteria within seven years.

Trial Set For Woman In Husband's Body Case

MADISON, Neb. (AP) — A Nebraska woman accused of hiding her husband's body under a blanket has pleaded not guilty to concealing human remains.

KTIV-TV in Sioux City, Iowa, says 64-year-old Jeanne Fry, of Madison, entered the plea on Friday in Madison County District Court. Her trial is set for March 5.

Fry was arrested in November after the decomposing body of her 63-year-old husband, Jack, was found under a blanket in their camper at a Madison campground.

He was reported missing by a relative in August. Police believe he had been dead for months.

S.D. Reps Say They Were Threatened Over Bill

BY VERONICA ZARAGOVIA
Associated Press

PIERRE — Two lawmakers who said they were threatened with smear campaigns if they didn't support a bill that would have allowed people to carry concealed weapons without a special permit nonetheless helped kill it Friday.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Don Kopp, R-Rapid City, would have eliminated a concealed weapons permit requirement for people who comply with other handgun laws. Kopp told the Associated Press he introduced the bill because he had received a barrage of e-mails recently from constituents asking that the regulation be lifted.

The bill received support from the South Dakota Gun Owners, and two lawmakers said they received threats from the group if they failed to support it. Rep. Peggy Gibson said members told her they would "come after"

her if she voted against the bill.

The gun rights group — officials for which could not be reached for comment — has a controversial history in the state.

"They send letters saying if you don't vote for bills, they'll ruin your political campaign by sending postcards to your constituents that you don't support gun rights and legislation," said Gibson, D-Huron.

Republican Reps. Gene Abdallah, who said he also received threats, and Brian Gosch said they voted against the bill in part because of the group's support for it.

"I won't vote for anything associated with the South Dakota Gun Owners," said Abdallah, of Sioux Falls.

Gosch, of Rapid City, said, "The merit of the bill is something I support, but I can't support this bill because one backer is the South Dakota Gun Owners."

The House Judiciary Committee voted the bill down 7-5.

Both Gibson and Abdallah say they have an A-plus rating from the National Rifle Association, which gives grades to lawmakers according to their support for the right to bear arms.

Gibson said she has nothing against gun ownership in general and described her gun collection and her husband's passion for hunting. But she said the permit requirement is in place to keep criminals and mentally ill people from carrying concealed loaded weapons.

Edward Rambazzo, who spoke on behalf of South Dakota Gun Owners, said murder rates have dropped or stayed low in the four states — Alaska, Arizona, Vermont and Wyoming — that don't require permits for concealed weapons. He described South Dakota's \$10 permit fee as a "tax on the Second Amendment" and said the state shouldn't criminalize self-defense.

Director Of Nebraska Foster Care Review Board Resigns

BY MICHAEL AVOK
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — The embattled executive director of Nebraska's Foster Care Review Board resigned from her post Friday, but plans to remain active in children's issues.

Director Carol Stitt reached an agreement with the 11-member review board during a meeting that was called to give her an annual performance appraisal. There was speculation that the 29-year director either would resign or be fired.

Stitt's attorney, Alan Peterson, said there was no review on Friday and the meeting focused instead on a settlement.

The Nebraska Foster Care Review Board, an independent arm of state government that tracks foster care cases to ensure children are being cared for properly, has been under fire for some time. Critics have questioned the competency of the department's contractor oversight in recent years following embarrassing findings.

Last year, a woman who worked for a private group that had a contract with the state was arrested for having a blood-alcohol level that was five times the legal limit while transporting a foster child in Sarpy County. In addition, the state auditor found that a nonprofit group serving about two dozen special-needs children overcharged Nebraska taxpayers \$15,000 a month for three nondescript buildings outside Kearney.

In November, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel said Stitt should be fired for engaging in prohibited political activity in 2006. Federal investigators found she broke the law by inviting staff and foster care families to a political fundraiser for Tom Osborne during his run for governor. Stitt maintained that she never intended to coerce anyone.

Stitt will step down as director immediately, but will be retained as a consultant to the Foster Care Review Board until May 1. Peterson said Stitt will receive a full salary and benefits until that time, and her health insurance will be paid for 18 months.

Poet Putting Plan For Ethanol Pipeline On Hold

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

STIOUX FALLS — The nation's largest ethanol company, Poet LLC, announced Friday that it is putting on hold its plan to build a dedicated ethanol pipeline because of the lack of prospects for a federal loan guarantee.

Sioux Falls-based Poet and Magellan Midstream Partners LP had been studying the feasibility of a \$3.5 billion, 1,800-mile pipeline that would send ethanol from plants in Iowa, South Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio to distribution terminals in the northeastern United States.

Magellan announced it was placing its interest in the project on hold early last year.

Jeff Broin, Poet's chief executive, said the pipeline is a viable project that would have tremendous benefits for the country.

"But with little prospects for a federal loan guarantee in the near future we are currently focused on

other efforts." Broin said in a statement.

A 2010 Department of Energy study suggested that a dedicated ethanol pipeline could be profitable if the biofuel expanded beyond its use as a 10-percent additive in standard cars. That would come from a transition to a 15-percent blend in standard cars or a greatly expanded use of E85, an 85-percent blend that runs in flexible fuel vehicles.

But the DOE study also noted several barriers.

Ethanol tends to cause more internal cracking of carbon steel pipe than gasoline or diesel, but the study found that an ethanol pipeline could operate safely and without stress corrosion cracking when appropriate measures are taken. There are also siting and regulatory barriers, and such a project is unlikely to find affordable financing because of demand and supply uncertainty, and it would require government financial assistance.

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